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THE CLOSING YEAR.

BY M. E. S.

One morning in the closing year
You crossed the uplands veiled in snow;
The winter sunshine glittered clear

Till leafless branches, dry and sere,
With diamonds seemed all aglow—
One morning in the closing year.

The robin in the hedgerow near
Was pouring forth a warble low:
The winter sunshine glittered clear

The tall reeds by the frozen mere
Swayed in the light wind to and fro,
One morning in the closing year.

I saw your shy sweet smiles appear,
I watched your blushes come and go;
The winter sunshine glittered clear.

Upon your brow, your eyes so dear,
Your red lips curved like Cupid's bow.
One morning in the closing year
The winter sunshine glittered clear!

FOR HIM ALONE.

BY B. M. C.

CHAPTER III.—(CONTINUED.)

IT was the chill breeze coming from the lake that roused me. I had been absorbed in trying to penetrate the mystery of the Baronet's household, and I found that the time had passed rapidly. I hastened back to the house; and as I stood outside the porch, which was hidden by great masses of white jessamine and climbing roses, I heard a strange voice say:

"You have visitors at Ullamere, Rudolph?"

"No," was the quick reply, "we have not."

"There was one of the loveliest girls I have ever seen in my life down by the lakeside," added the strange voice. "I saw her as I was crossing the bridge—a brunette, perfect in her way."

"Miss Forster," said Sir Rudolph quietly.

"And who is Miss Forster?" asked the unknown.

"She is, as you say, a most lovely girl, and she is as good as she is lovely. She lives here at Ullamere as companion to Lady Culmore."

Then I heard a light laugh.

"I should not have thought you would have allowed that. You were always companion enough for her."

I hurried away. The conversation was not intended for me, and surely he, the stranger must have been mistaken in calling me a lovely girl. Why, at school, the other girls were always teasing me about my dusky hair and dark eyes. Of course this must be Ulric Culmore. I longed to see his face, for his voice was both rich and musical. I was young, and no one had ever praised me, no one had ever paid me any homage. My heart thrilled with delight at this tribute to my beauty.

Then the dinner-bell rang. I felt shy and embarrassed; but I had no time to think of myself. Lady Culmore came to my room and we went down together.

I went into the room with Lady Culmore. She trembled so that she could hardly hold her fan in her hands. Some one came to meet us as we entered; some one with a handsome face and winning voice took Lady Culmore's hand in his and said:—

"Why, Nest, you are not looking well! What is the matter? Will you introduce me to Miss Forster?"

Ah me! the thought of the rapture of that moment will cause my heart to thrill with ecstacy until I die! So I met my fate—the love that was my doom. It came to me when Ulric Culmore looked into my face for the first time. I remember it was only a momentary glance; but my heart beat fast, a mist came before my eyes, a vague something stirred in my heart; one glance from those beautiful eyes had suddenly roused my whole being into new life.

Sir Rudolph came into the room and went to speak to his brother. I turned to Lady Culmore, who looked very pale and agitated.

"Pray forgive me, Lady Culmore," I said. "What was the pretty name by which Mr. Culmore called you?"

A sad, sweet smile came over her beautiful face.

"Nest," she replied. "It is a Welsh name. I cannot tell why it was given to me. It brings back so much to my mind. I have not heard the name for a year—for a whole year. I had almost forgotten it."

Then I looked up in wonder, for I heard a sound that was quite novel to me—Sir Rudolph laughing, actually laughing, in the most light-hearted fashion.

How completely that laugh changed the expression of his face it would be impossible to tell. I had been at Ullamere from Christmas Eve until now, this end of May, and such a thing had never occurred before.

"Kate," said Lady Culmore, "do you think that Ulric will notice Sir Rudolph's manner to me?"

I felt sure that he must; but I did my best to comfort her by saying that we would talk so much that it would not be perceived.

CHAPTER IV.

THE dinner that evening was, for two of us at least, an anxious event. Lady Culmore evidently did not wish Mr. Culmore to see the peculiar footing on which she stood with Sir Rudolph. He himself did not change his manner in the least. Except for the needful civilities of the table, he did not address his wife. She spoke to him several times, and between us we managed to hide from the visitor the terrible state of things that existed. Yet I saw him once or twice look from one to the other with strangely wondering eyes, as though he could not quite understand how matters stood. He was bewildered and puzzled. Later in the evening he came over to me. He talked to me, and the sound of his voice was sweet and pleasant to my ears. Yet I was not so much engrossed but that I saw Lady Culmore go up to her husband and speak to him, and he had answered:—

"A contract is a contract. Ours cannot be broken."

The gentlemen remained in the drawing-room for half an hour.

Sir Rudolph seemed devotedly attached to his brother; the love that should have been lavished on his wife was given to him. It was delightful to see them together; he was so amiable, so attentive. Ulric so bright and kindly. But Lady Culmore was sorely pained. I did not remember ever having seen her look so unhappy. Ulric made no change in his treatment of her. He was kind, attentive, and affectionate to her. Either he knew her secret and thought nothing of it, or he did not know, and retained his old affectionate respect for her.

Mr. Culmore came to breakfast with us the next morning, and was startled at not finding his brother there.

"Where is Rudolph?" he asked.

"He seldom takes breakfast with us," replied Lady Culmore, her face flushing painfully. And Ulric, seeing it, said no more.

So the days passed, and though Ulric's presence seemed to have brought light and sunshine, it wrought no change in the unhappy relationship which existed between husband and wife. He never alluded to it; he seemed gradually to fall in with our strange ways.

After a few days, Lady Culmore recovered herself, finding that her brother-in-law merely wondered and looked puzzled.

How am I to tell what next happened? What words shall I find sweet enough, fair enough for my story? On Christmas Eve, leaning over the stile that led into the snow-clad meadows, looking up to the night-sky where the stars shone, I had prayed Heaven as a Christmas gift to send some one to love me; and with the budding of the green leaves, with the singing of birds and the sunshine of May, my prayer was granted.

At first I thought of Ulric Culmore simply as a scholar and a gentleman; later I began to look upon him as the handsomest, noblest, most generous of men; finally I found that his presence greatly affected me.

I gave him the whole love of my heart, and I never thought of its being returned.

Ulric Culmore had come to Ullamere to study and to rest, yet how often in the early mornings, when the lake was like a sheet of molten gold and the rosy light lay on the distant hills, I found him in the grounds or down by the water side! And I had not the faintest idea that he came because he wished to talk to me.

Mr. Culmore liked talking to me. He always took breakfast with Lady Culmore and me. He very often came during the morning to read to us as we sat in the shade of the great spreading trees; he followed us always into the drawing-room after dinner; he accompanied us in our walks and drives.

"How much pleasanter a house is when there is a gentleman to take an interest in matters!" I said one day thoughtlessly to Lady Culmore. I repented the words the moment I saw her face grow pale.

One morning Ulric and I were together amongst the roses. He plucked one and gave it to me; it was a lovely moss-rose-bud peeping coquettishly from its green leaves.

"Do you know what this means?" he asked.

I said "No," that I knew nothing of the language of flowers.

"You do not know what a mossrose bud symbolises?" he questioned. "Promise me to try to find out."

Was it the warm sunlight that dazzled my happy eyes? I could not look at him. I took the rosebud and ran away shamefacedly.

It was only natural that I should go to the library in search of a "Language of Flowers," and I read, "Mossrose bud—confession of love." Ah me, I smile now. But then, when I read it, a great and almost solemn awe came over me.

Like an icy wind, came the memory of Lady Culmore. She had loved her husband, and what was her reward? I remembered what she said when I told her of my prayer on Christmas Eve. Yet, not heeding the warning, I wrapped up my rosebud. I wonder it ever one small flower made any girl so perfectly happy before?

* * * * *

Dinner was over; it had been the ordinary curious constrained meal, with the usual complete estrangement of husband and wife, the usual efforts at cheerfulness on the part of Mr. Culmore.

How it happened I cannot tell. I seem to see that evening always through a golden mist. Sir Rudolph was in his study, engaged at some business about the estate, Lady Culmore had disappeared, and Ulric came to me.

"Miss Forster," he said, "do not waste this beautiful evening indoors. Our host and hostess have both withdrawn. Let us enjoy the last rays of the sun. Will you come?"

Would I? My heart went out to him in answer. Whither could he have led that I would not have followed?

"You will not need hat or cloak this lovely evening," he continued.

A black shawl of Lady Culmore's lay on the couch. He wrapped it in Spanish fashion round my head and shoulders.

"I will show the flowers their queen," he said. "Let us leave the world, with all its cares and miseries, behind us, Miss Forster, and go for an hour into fairyland."

"Where is fairyland?" I asked.

"Wherever we like to make it," he replied. "We shall find ours near the lake."

Shall I ever forget the scented magnolia, which was in full bloom and filled the air with perfume? Shall I ever forget the cry of the cushat dove, the song of the nightingale on the far side of the lake, the golden light on the water, the fair blue sky, the scent of the blossoms we crushed beneath our feet?

My lover was silent for some minutes; then he took both my hands, looking at them earnestly.

"You wear no rings, Miss Forster," he said.

"I haven't any," I replied quickly. "Madame gave me my mother's wedding ring; but it broke."

"I wonder if you will think me very rude if I make one comment?" he continued.

"I should never think you rude," I answered, "make what comment you might.

"You wear no engagement ring! I venture to conclude that you are not engaged?"

"To be married, do you mean?" I asked, in supreme wonder.

"Yes, to be married," he said.

"Oh, no! How could that be? I have been at school all my life."

"You have never had a lover?" he persued.

"No, never," I answered.

"I knew it," he said. "Ah, Kate, no woman's eyes are ever the same after a lover has looked into their depths. Yours are as clear as the morning star. No lover has ever gazed into them. Kate, raise them to mine."

But, instead of that, I buried my face in my hands.

"I love you so dearly, so well, Kate, that I will devote my life to you. Will you love me in return?"

I did—Heaven alone knew how well. I did not tell him all—how I had loved him from the first moment I had heard his voice. Some few details I kept secret from him. We plighted our troth by the side of the lake—a troth that has never been broken, and never will be.

And there, in the glory of the evening sunset, my lover kissed me for the first time; and that kiss bound my heart to him for ever.

"Mr. Culmore," I began.

"Never 'Mr. Culmore' again, Kate," he said. "Mine is not a melodious name, but you must try to use it. Say 'Ulric' always when you speak to me."

"Ulric," I said shyly, "do not tell any one just yet. Let me grow accustomed to it first."

"I will do as you wish, my darling," he said, "but for a short time only."

And then, although we were so near the house that any one could see us from the windows, he actually kissed me again.

CHAPTER V.

IT was a glorious morning at the end of June. My lover—Heaven bless his handsome head and dark beautiful face!—had come out to smoke a cigar under the chestnut trees. As a matter of course, I must go with him. Sir Rudolph had ridden over to Ullsdale; Ulric had declined to accompany him.

"We will have a little picnic of our own, Kate," he said. "I will have a cigar or two, you shall have some fruit, and we will improve the shining hours."

It was absurd to resist, to make excuses—which I did hypocritically enough—for nothing on earth was so delightful to me as to be with him.

"You forget," I said, "that I am Lady Culmore's companion."

"I know that you are my companion," he said; "and I shall not give you up, either to Lady Culmore or any one else. I have come to the end of my endurance. To love you as I do, yet not to be at liberty to give full expression to that love, is torture. Last night, when you were singing, you looked so captivating that I could hardly refrain from taking you in my arms and kissing you."

"It was well you did not," I said, wondering what Lady Culmore would have thought.

"You said, dearest, you wished me to keep silence about our engagement for a short time, because you wanted to grow accustomed to it. Are you accustomed to it yet?"

I raised my happy eyes to his face, and told him that the wonder of it was so great that, if I lived for a century, it would still be a source of supreme astonishment to me.

"Evidently then it is quite useless waiting any longer. Let me tell my brother this evening. My darling, I want to marry you in the autumn. Are those tears in your eyes, Kate?"

"Yes, tears of joy," I replied. "I am so happy, Ulric—no girl in the wide world was ever happier; but I cannot forget the misery that surrounds us. If I could see Lady Culmore less miserable, Sir Rudolph more like you, I should not care."

His face grew grave, the laughter died from his eyes.

"I understand," he said, in a low voice, "and I sympathize sincerely, Kate," he [illegible] "but I have never liked to speak to you about the matter, but what can possibly have parted those two? Do you know anything about it?"

"Nothing in the world," I replied. "No one could know less."

"Has this coldness existed ever since you have been here?"

"Yes; and it is that which makes me dislike to speak of my own happy love."

"I have said nothing about it," continued Ulric; "but I was never so shocked, so startled, so distressed in my life. The first night I spent here I thought the coldness was merely a passing one—and even that horrified me; but, when I saw that it was always the same, that nothing changed or softened it, I was bewildered.

"Do you know, Kate, that they were once the most devoted of lovers, that Rudolph was mad about her, and that she, so beautiful and graceful, was sought after everwhere? She rejected some of the best offers in England to marry Rudolph."

"And now is he tired of her?" I asked.

"No, that is not it. I have watched them closely—for I would do anything to bring about a different state of things—and have come to the conclusion that there is a secret between them, and that it concerns Nest."

"Of what nature is the secret, do you think, Ulric?" I asked

Ulric suddenly looked terribly distressed.

"Why," I cried, "the shadow is spreading to you! You look so miserable. What is it?"

"A horrible idea," he replied—"a false one, I could swear, but so unutterably horrible that it has made me ill."

He looked ill.

"Tell me what it is," I requested.

"I cannot, Kate. To save my life I would not put into words the idea that has crossed my mind. Forgive me, my darling, I have a fit of the horrors. I am ashamed of myself. Tell me one thing more. Justice is justice. Tell me, in all her raving and her prayers, has Lady Culmore ever said anything about a little child?"

"Why," I cried in wonder, "that is the very thing she is afraid of!"

I told him of the scenes which had occurred. He stood like one transfixed.

"Yes," he said at last, "I believe I am right! I believe with my whole heart and soul that I am right. Kate, it is all over with our picnic. Come back to the house."

* * * * * *

From that hour Ulric Culmore was a changed man. The blight, the shadow that lay over the others had spread now to him. He was silent, abstracted, and gloomy. At times he seemed to try hard to become his old genial self again, but the attempt always failed.

What was the mystery that hung over Ullsmere, that seemed to blight every one it touched? Something about a little child; yet Lady Culmore had had no children, no little brothers or sisters. What could it be? It seemed useless thinking.

One morning—it was the beginning of July, and the tiger lilies were all in bloom—he was standing in the porch, looking round him with certainly the saddest expression I had ever seen on his face. I went up to him and clasped both my hands round his arm.

"You look so unhappy, Ulric," I said. "You have never been yourself since the day of our picnic. What can I do to win back the smiles?"

"Bear with me, my darling," he said, "until I have made up my mind what to do. Kate," he added suddenly, "you are one of the noblest and least mercenary of women. Has it occurred to you that, if my brother dies without children, the estate and title come to me?"

"No, I have not thought of it," I replied.

"It is so," he said sadly. "If no son be born to Rudolph, I shall be Sir Ulric Culmore."

He looked so grave, and he spoke so sadly, that I could not help saying:

"You do not look very happy about it, Ulric."

"I am not," he replied. "I—I fear there has been a great wrong done. It—oh, Heaven, how can I ever say the words?—if what I dread be true, I will take neither title nor estate. I would rather go out to the back woods and make a fortune there."

"Shall you never tell me what it is, Ulric?" I asked.

"It would serve no purpose, Kate, and would only embitter your life," he replied. "You say rightly that I have not been the same man since the thought came to me, and it would be as bad for you."

"Are you always going to be miserable, gloomy, and sad, Ulric?" I asked.

"Not always, darling, I hope," he answered, with a sigh.

"When shall you be your old self, Ulric? I love the old self the best. You were so bright, so happy and blithe. When will the Ulric I love come back again?"

"When this terrible doubt is settled," he replied.

"And when will that be?" I asked.

He stood silent for some minutes, and then answered:

"When I can find courage to speak to my brother."

"When shall you find courage?" I pursued after a time.

"I do not know, Kate; honestly speaking, I do not know. If I am correct in my terrible suspicion, then there is very little happiness for any of us in this world. If I am not correct, my brother will be so bitterly angry with me for the suspicion that he will never forgive me. I must watch for my opportunity, Kate."

Later on that same day Sir Rudolph called him into the library, and showed him the plans for some alterations at Brooke Hall. He related to me all that passed between them.

"Ulric, come and look at these plans," said Sir Rudolph. "They came this morning from Millsom, in London. What do you think of them?"

The brothers bent over the papers. Their opinions did not quite agree; Sir Rudolph liked one set, Ulric the other.

"I will choose these," said Sir Rudolph, pointing to the set that Ulric preferred.

"No," laughed Ulric; "Brooke Hall belongs to you. Rudolph, let the alterations be in accordance with your taste, not mine."

"True, Brooke Hall is mine, but I shall never live there. It will never be home to me any more. I hate the place, and I intend never to enter it again."

"Hate Brooke Hall!" cried Ulric. "Why, I thought you liked it?"

"I did a short time since; I do not now."

"How has the place displeased you, Rudolph?"

Sir Rudolph's face darkened.

"That does not matter, Ulric," he said. "I do not care about being questioned. In the natural course of things the Hall must come to you when I die."

"Nonsense! You will have sons and daughters of your own, Rudolph. I have no wish to succeed you. My career is marked out for me, and I hope to make myself famous."

Sir Rudolph laid both his hands on Ulric's shoulders, and looked into his face.

"We have loved each other truly, have we not, Ulric?"

"Yes, and shall always do so," replied Ulric.

"Then take my word for it, brother, that no son or daughter of mine will ever succeed me. You will be Sir Ulric Culmore, of Brooke; and I pray Heaven with my whole heart that you may have a happier life than mine."

"Yet," said Ulric, "you have had everything to make you happy."

"Outwardly happy, yes. Every heart knows its own secrets. I had dreamed—Heaven knows how I had dreamed—of a very different life from this."

Then the brothers faced each other.

"In the old days we had no secrets from each other," said Ulric earnestly. "When you were a gay careless young lieutenant and I a struggling barrister, we knew each other's thoughts, Ru.

"I knew of your love for Nest, and you knew how I was looking for an ideal that I have since found. We had not a secret from each other. We stood, true brothers, heart to heart, face to face, no shadow between us, loving, loyal, and true. Now, Ru, tell me what stands between us."

"A secret," answered Sir Rudolph.

"I know it," answered Ulric. "Whose secret is it?"

"If it were mine," replied Sir Rudolph, "you would have been made acquainted with it long ago. It concerns another, and I hold it."

"Can you not entrust it to me?" asked Ulric.

"I would, but the other who shares it will not. Better far not to know it. It has blighted my life; it might blight yours."

"Perhaps," said Ulric, "I might help you."

"Impossible. There is no help. There is nothing but patient endurance until life ends; and the greatest mercy I can ask from Heaven is that mine may end soon."

"As we are talking, Ru, more in the old fashion than the new, let me ask you one thing. What has gone wrong between you and Nest?"

Sir Rudolph's face paled, and his lips quivered.

"I cannot tell you; I would if I could."

"Is it the same secret that has blighted your life, Ru? Has it come between your wife and yourself?"

"Yes," he replied, after a pause; "it is the same thing."

"And, Ru, will it always last? Shall you never take Nest in your arms again and kiss her with the old love?"

"Never," he replied—"never!"

"Has she done that which you can never forgive, Ru?"

"She has," he replied. "I would not answer such questions to any other living creature," said Sir Rudolph. "To you, my brother, I may say this much—no more."

"And shall you live and die, Ru, without telling us what this terrible secret is which has spoiled your life?"

"I hope so," he replied. "It would do no one good, and would do much harm."

"My dear old Ru," said Ulric, "are you quite sure that this is wise? It is brotherly love, and not curiosity, that prompts me to speak. Are you wise in this? No man could bear such a burden long. You will break down. Now, while there is time, let me help you."

"You cannot help," he replied gloomily.

"Do you mean to tell me that your whole life is to be spent in this fashion—hidden from the world, blighted—nay, worse, wasted? It is inconceivable. If a wrong has been done, let it be set right."

"It can never be set right," answered Sir Rudolph.

"Then forget it. What is the use of brooding over a sorrow that can never be healed? Be brave and strong, Ru. Trample it down, live it down. What is the use of all this tragical mystery? Let us end it."

"There can be no end," said Sir Rudolph solemnly. "Now, Ulric, we will discuss this matter no further."

CHAPTER VI.

LATELY we had one visitor at Ullsmere, and that was the Reverend John Thornleigh, Rector of Ullsdale, though why he came I could not imagine. He and I had become very good friends. He liked to talk to me. I knew afterwards that he loved me, and would have asked me to be his wife but that he heard of my engagement.

His wife was dead—had died when his only son was born; and nothing seemed to give him such comfort as talking to me about her.

When the Rector was announced, if by any accident we were all three together, Sir Rudolph and Lady Culmore would remain for a short time. It was a great embarrassment to the Rector—I could see that.

Apart, he could talk to them, but, together, he looked in a state of bewilderment from one to the other. He saw plainly enough the terms on which they lived; that no unnecessary word ever passed between them; that strangers could not be less to each other than this husband and wife.

He saw that all efforts to draw them nearer together were quite unavailing. It was distressing to him, and, unlike myself, he never became accustomed to it. I did.

At first it was uncomfortable enough; but, from force of habit, the time came when I could carry on a conversation with both at the same time, without the slightest embarrassment. The Rector could not.

He grew confused; he appealed from one to the other. His appeals were met with stern coldness by Sir Rudolph, with an excess of embarrassment by Lady Culmore. Of the two, he liked Lady Culmore the best. She was always most kind to him, and ready to help his charitable work when he needed it.

I was present once when he said to her:

"Lady Culmore, do you never attend any place of worship?"

And she made answer, "Never."

The Rector was a good man. He had a real love for his profession. Moreover, he was clever and accomplished. He looked just a little shocked when Lady Culmore answered thus.

"Do you not think," he began. But she interrupted him.

"If you please, Mr. Thornleigh, we will not discuss the matter. I yield at once. I am quite sure that every one ought to go to some place of worship. I have my own reasons for staying away, and they are known only to one."

What could any man say in answer to that?

Then the Rector grew more confidential with me. He talked a great deal about Sir Rudolph and Lady Culmore. They were two of the pleasantest people he had ever met, he said, and he deeply deplored the terrible estrangement between them. Like every one else who knew them, he wondered greatly what had caused it.

He was a true friend of theirs, and, knowing that, we talked always in the hope that we might be able to do something. But, after a time, I saw that it was impracticable; there was nothing to be done.

The Rector never tired of talking to me about his little child. I went to see him at the Rectory. On my return I told Lady Culmore all about his sweet baby ways.

"Do ask him here, Lady Culmore," I said. "You cannot think how the presence of a child brightens a house. These rooms would be very different with a child playing and laughing, or even crying in them. Do ask him, Lady Culmore," I urged; "I am sure it would cheer and amuse you."

She grew very pale—so pale that I thought she would swoon.

"My dear, it would simply kill me," she replied.

"How could the visit of a sweet little boy like little Willie hurt you?" I asked, in some surprise.

She made no answer to the question, and I continued:

"It would please Sir Rudolph, I am sure."

"It would not," she cried; "you are quite mistaken. It would——" Then she stopped abruptly. "No, Miss Forster; if you wish me well, never let any children come to Ullsmere."

"Do you not like children?" I asked.

"Yes," she answered wearily. "I suppose it is part of the nature of all women to love them."

"I am not quite sure of that, Lady Culmore," I answered. "I have seen and known women who did not like children at all."

So I relinquished my idea. But thinking over one incident after another, it seemed clear to me that, whatever was the secret, the tragedy, the mystery of Lady Culmore's life, it was connected with a little child.

* * * * * *

A most unexpected event happened ere long—the Rector was invited to dinner. It appears a trivial incident in itself,

hardly worth recording, but it led to greater events.

It must have been at Ulric's suggestion. Sir Rudolph never asked any human being near the place, and Lady Culmore dreaded seeing any one.

I may mention that Ulric had pretended to be dreadfully jealous of the Rector and his baby son, and that I was both young and foolish enough to be flattered by his jealousy, and thought it a great thing to have such a tall handsome man jealous about me.

One bright sunny morning, when I was starting with Ulric for the lake, the Rector was announced, and I was obliged to stay and entertain him—neither the master nor the mistress of the house was to be seen. Ulric's face darkened.

"Is there really no one but you, Kate, to entertain visitors? The Rector is what you ladies call 'such a handsome man!' Do not stay long, dear. Think of the pleasant time we shall have, the boat gliding over the lake among the water lilies—a delightful prospect for a warm day."

"I must hear what he has to say, Ulric," I remonstrated.

As it happened, the Rector had a great deal to say. He was very anxious about the inhabitants of Ulladale. The town was very unhealthy; and, as Sir Rudolph owned a great deal of property there, he wished to see him and talk to him about it. Some of the houses, the Rector said, were so badly built, so badly ventilated, that they were neither more nor less than traps for fever and death.

"Do not think that I am an alarmist," he added; "but, Miss Forster, if fever does break out there, it will be fatal to many."

I advised him to see Sir Rudolph. So it came about that the Rector was invited to dinner—an event in the Ullamere household.

That was the most cheerful dinner I remember at Ullamere. The unnatural coldness and silence of husband and wife were not noticed so much when there was a visitor present. The Rector had plenty to say, Ulric was in better spirits than I had seen him for some time.

Suddenly—I cannot remember how it began—the conversation turned on capital punishment, and the Rector quoted the well-known words that "the worst use to which you can put a man is to hang him."

I noticed that at first neither Sir Rudolph nor Lady Culmore joined in the conversation. They sat listening in silence, Sir Rudolph looking paler than usual, Lady Culmore with an unusual flush on her beautiful face. The Rector and Ulric argued the question hotly, Ulric being in favor of and the Rector against the punishment of death.

"Opinions differ," said Ulric. "Where life is taken in the mad heat of passion, it is perhaps hardly murder. It is when life is taken after cool, calm deliberation, after thought and reflection, that I call the deed murder."

The word fell painfully on our ears.

"It is a horrible word—'murder,'" I said. "The very sound of it is terrible."

"I read a strange story the other day," said the Rector, "one that struck me very forcibly. A man murdered his wife, how or why I forget; she had given him some provocation perhaps. He ran away, when, of course, a 'hue and cry' was sent out, and the police were soon after him.

"He had hidden himself in a low part of the town, and in the very house where he was concealed a terrible fire occurred. A poor woman was sleeping in one of the upper rooms, and her cries were heard. This man who had murdered his wife risked, absolutely risked his life to save the woman who was a stranger to him.

"He rushed through the flames and suffocating smoke; the hair was burned from his head, his face and hands suffered, but he saved her life. While she was in the act of blessing and thanking him for it, the police captured him. 'You will hang me for killing my wife,' he said to them. 'I killed her because she provoked me, but I am sorry for it.'

"Some one present quoted the words, 'A life for a life.' 'That is Scripture,' said the man calmly. 'I have literally fulfilled it. I killed my wife, but I have given life to this woman, inasmuch as I have saved her from death. Truly it is a life for a life.' The story struck me as being a strange one," added the Rector.

Something induced me to look at Lady Culmore's face. Her eyes were fixed on the Rector's face; she hung upon each word that fell from his lips. There was a strange light in her eyes that I had never seen there before.

"Yes," said Ulric; "but the man was mistaken. The proper reading of the words is that whosoever takes a man's life shall pay for it with his own."

"If one life pays for another," Lady Culmore broke in, "how can it matter who pays it in?"

Every one looked up in wonder. Her clear sweet tones vibrated through the room, her beautiful face flushed. Sir Rudolph regarded her in astonishment. She went on:

"If any one takes a life and gives a life, does not that equalize matters?" she asked; and I detected something of scornful bitterness in her voice. "If the life given be more valuable than the life taken, does not that more than discharge the debt?"

"No," said the Rector, in a distinct voice that seemed to startle us—"no. That is the view of a distorted mind, Lady Culmore, of one that does not distinguish clearly between right and wrong."

I saw her shrink as she would have shrunk from a blow.

"What a gloomy conversation!" cried Ulric suddenly. "How can we have drifted into it? Let us dismiss the subject. Lady Culmore, you ought to have dismissed us."

"I have been greatly interested," she said; and again there was something new and strange in her voice, while the light still flashed in her eyes.

During the long discussion husband and wife hardly looked at each other. But at the words "life for a life" I saw Lady Culmore raise her eyes and fix them on her husband's face. Who could read them with their messages of love, regret, and hope?

So the evening passed; and, when the Rector had gone, Sir Rudolph, with a hasty "Good night," retired also. Lady Culmore, who seemed quite abstracted, walked to the window and drew the blind aside. She stood there looking out into the darkness.

"Kate," whispered my lover, "come here; I want you;" and we went into the conservatory, which was dimly lighted. "My dear"—with a quiet caress—"you have behaved wonderfully well this evening."

"I always behave well, Ulric."

"You did not flirt with the Rector at all, and I must make full amends. He has a fine face; he argues well too. Kate, I am sure that he admires you. Does the bracelet fit, darling?"

This was merely an excuse to hold up my arm and kiss it. I pointed to Lady Culmore standing at the window.

"She will not see me," said Ulric; "and if she does, it will not matter. Fancy, dearest, what I suffer, sitting all night watching your beautiful face, and never able to kiss the lips I love or gaze into the eyes that hold all bliss for me. Kate, I must be indemnified!"

It was useless pointing to Lady Culmore. It was useless to do or say anything; and, to be quite honest, perhaps I did not mind so very much.

"Remember," said my lover, with a flush on his handsome face—"remember that I shall speak to my brother to-morrow. I will not put up with another day's delay."

He bade me "Good night" in his usual lover-like fashion, and went away. Then I crossed over to Lady Culmore. She turned to me when I spoke to her.

"Oh, my dear," she said, "who is it?"

"Who is what?" I asked.

"You should see your own face, Kate; you should see your own eyes. As we stand side by side, you are the very picture of happiness, as I am the picture of woe."

I was ashamed of myself. I wished that I could drive the light of happiness from my face and eyes.

"I am haunted," she said, "by those words, 'a life for a life.' What a strange conversation that was, Kate!"

"Neither cheerful nor pleasant," I replied. "And, if I were you, Lady Culmore, I would forget all about it."

"I wish," she cried passionately, "that I could forget all about myself, even to my very name!"

CHAPTER VII.

ULRIC had no chance of fulfilling his threat on the following day, for Sir Rudolph rode off early in the morning to Ulladale, to inspect the houses of which the Rector had spoken. The heat was intense.

The heavens were like molten brass. The white lilies drooped, the roses hung their heads; the birds had hidden themselves in their leafy coverts; there was not a ripple on the lake, not a whisper of wind from the mountain tops to relieve the settled intense heat.

"I wish Sir Rudolph had not gone to Ulladale to-day," said Lady Culmore; "it is so hot, and he will be in and out of those horrible houses. I shall be miserable about him. I have such a sense of coming sorrow on me."

Ulric laughed.

"Now, Nest, we will not have that. Things are bad enough; we will not have any fo...bodings of coming sorrow."

"I cannot help it," she said, with pale trembling lips.

It was a long quiet day. Ulric and I spent the morning under the cedar. He read and I worked, with various little happy interludes.

Night came, and Sir Rudolph returned in safety. Although Lady Culmore had been anxious concerning him all day, she did not go out to meet him; she gave utterance to none of the joy she felt at seeing him; but I saw that her whole heart went out to him, though she repressed all outward signs of emotion.

Dinner was an utter failure; no one was hungry, no one could eat. Even Ulric succumbed to the heat, and he had little to say.

The Rector had not been near us all day, nor had we had any news of little Willie; but on the following morning, when we sat at breakfast, all four together, for a wonder, he was announced. He came in looking very anxious, with dark shadows beneath his eyes. Before he greeted us he cried, in a distressed voice:

"Little Willie is very ill."

We were all grieved. The poor Rector seemed heart-broken.

"What is the matter?" asked Ulric. "One must not attach too much importance to the ailments of children. They seem to be at death's door one day, and they are quite well again the next."

"Yes; but he is very ill," said the Rector gravely. "I was sent for early this morning to visit the poor woman who lives by the west lake. As I was returning, I met Doctor Johnson, who had just been to see my little boy, and he tells me that he is very ill indeed. I thought I would call here, and ask you to let the groom drive me home. I shall reach the Rectory so much more quickly."

Sir Rudolph insisted on driving him himself; and he left us all very sorrowful.

That evening we were just finishing dinner, when a note came from the Rectory which was addressed to me. It told the terrible news that little Willie was ill of small-pox of the malignant type. The nurse had taken him to some cottage where a woman lay stricken with it, and the child had caught the contagion. To add to the Rector's distress, the nurse had fled from the house when she discovered what was the matter; the young housemaid, afraid of losing her good looks, also fled at once; and there was no one to attend to his darling boy but the old housekeeper. I read the letter aloud and then rose from my chair.

"Lady Culmore," I said, "will you let me go to the Rectory? I will nurse the child; I am not afraid, and I love little Willie. He must not want for care."

Ah, there was the same strange light on her beautiful face that I had remarked before, the same clear unearthly radiance in her eyes!

"No," she replied, "I will not let you go, Kate. If it be really malignant small-pox, it is very contagious, and generally fatal."

A strong arm was thrown around me; I felt myself drawn close to a faithful loving heart.

"You are not your own to do what you like with. You are mine, and I forbid you to go."

I clung to Ulric, weeping.

"The little child—I must go to the little child!" I sobbed.

"You shall not go near it," he said. "You are mine. There are plenty of clever trained nurses who can do the work better than you. I will not let you risk your life."

We had forgotten the presence of others; we had forgotten everything except each other. An astonished cry from Lady Culmore roused me.

"Ulric! Kate!" she exclaimed.

My lover raised his dark handsome flushed face.

"I forgot," he said. "I was going to tell you this morning. You know nothing of this. Rudolph, my brother, Nest"—I noticed, even at that moment, that he did not say, "Nest, my sister"—"I love Kate, and she has promised to be my wife."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

NATURE imitates itself. A grain thrown into good ground brings forth fruit; a principle and a good mind produce fruit.

Bric-a-Brac.

JAPANESE COOKING.—In Japanese cooking fingers are never used in the preparation of food. Chopsticks, spoons, and a score of other ingenious little utensils in white wood do the work, which is of the most elaborate nature, many of the dishes requiring twenty-four hours for their preparation.

SILENT.—It is the custom in Bulgaria for newly-married women to remain silent for a month after their marriage, except when addressed by their husbands. When it is desirable for the customary restriction to be permanently removed, he presents her with a gift, and then she can chatter to her heart's content.

HONOR TO THE FARM.—The older Romans paid special honors to agriculture. Their coin was stamped with symbols in connection therewith. The Greeks refreshed the mouths of their ploughing oxen with wine. Charles IX. exempted from arrest for debt all persons engaged in the cultivation of the staple articles of agriculture.

IN ITALY.—Poor young girls in Italy are provided with a marriage portion from a Government fund. The sum annually distributed in this manner amounts to no less than $25,000. To obtain a dowry the applicant has to produce witnesses as to her good character, and she has also to prove that her sweetheart has a trade, and that she herself has no means.

TO BRING RAIN.—It is a fixed belief among the Russian peasantry that throwing the dead body of a drunkard into the river is a sure cure for lack of rain. A case exhibiting this gross superstition was recently brought before the Criminal Sessions Court at Samara. Six peasants were tried and sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment for deliberately disinterring the body of a woman who had died of intoxication, and floating it down the Volga, as a means of causing rain.

CHINA AND KOREA.—The Chinese and Koreans are very superstitious. They will often buy small articles like biscuits, sweets, cosmetics, needle, thread, matches, soap, scent, medicines, etc., for the sake of a lucky label; and they will as often refrain from buying an article because it has to them an unlucky label. The coloring of a label is as important as its design. Some colors and combinations of colors are to the Chinese and Korean mind unlucky; other colors, though unlucky, are considered as appropriate only to certain commodities.

BREAD DISTRIBUTION IN PARIS.—In Paris the bread is distributed almost exclusively by women, who go to the bakehouses at half past five in the morning, and spend about an hour polishing up the loaves. After the loaves are thoroughly cleaned of dust and grit, the "bread porter" proceeds on her rounds. Those who live in apartments or flats find their loaves—six feet of bread—leaning against the door, just as the milk is left here. The wages earned by these bread carriers vary from about a quarter to a half a dollar a day, and their day's work is completed by ten o'clock in the morning.

THREE SPADESFUL EACH.—When a Jew is buried, his relatives do not leave the graveside till the coffin is covered with earth. Moreover, in order to show their regard for the deceased, they perform, with their own hands, part of the actual burial. Each of the relatives and friends present throws three spadesful of earth on to the coffin before he leaves it. The sight is moving in the extreme. The grief-stricken mourner, almost in a state of collapse, is supported by a couple of friends, while with trembling hands he performs this last act of respect towards a parent, brother, sister, or child. Then he is gently led aside while all the others present reverently do the same in turn.

REMINDERS.—Scarcely anybody does anything well for nothing, and certainly a lawyer does not. Lord Mansfield was so sensible of this that when, once, he had to attend to some professional business of his own, he took some guineas out of his purse and put them into his waistcoat pocket to give him the requisite stimulus. Sir Anthony Malone, an Irish Attorney-General, was so imprudent as to omit this precaution, and was greatly punished for it, for he was so inattentive regarding some property he bought for himself that he lost $15,000 a year by it. In future he caused his clerk to make an abstract of the title deeds of any property he bought, and lay it before him, with a fee of five guineas, properly indorsed, which the clerk was scrupulously to account for. After this Sir Anthony made no more mistakes—at least, as regards his own affairs.

PATIENCE.

BY E. F. W.

Weep not because the sunshine of thy days
By some dark cloud of sorrow is effaced,
Nor think, because thou canst not see its rays,
That life henceforth must be a dreary waste.

Hast thou not watch'd the brilliant summer sky
Grow dull and dim, with many a passing shower?
And yet as each successive storm swept by,
It seem'd more calm and lovely than before.

So shall it be with thee—the darkest night
At length must usher in the rising day;
And soon around thy path it shall be light,
And Hope's bright beams shall chase thy grief away.

TREASURE TROVE.

BY J. L.

It was a glorious day for the haymaking—bright sunshine, fine drying breezes, and the sky so serene, that no anxious thought need be taken for the morrow.

Date, some twenty years ago, when haymaking in such rural and unprogressive parishes as Middleton-under-hill was still one of the prettiest sights offered by the changing year.

No forlorn-looking figure, perched in lonely state on an American mowing machine, then made its dreary rounds in ever-contracting circles; no senseless clatter of whirling wheels and knives had as yet taken the place of merry human voices.

In Middleton, haymaking was still the annual "outing" of young and old, both pleasant and profitable in such good seasons. On this particular afternoon, nearly every man, woman, and child in the parish, capable of handling a scythe or a rake, was busy among the long sweet-scented hay.

Even the Rev. Francis Merion, curate-in-charge had left his study to take a share in the pleasant labor. Still well under thirty years of age, tall and straight as a guardsman, Merion was known far and near as a good oar, a capital shot, and a first-rate cricketer. Indeed, there were many men who asserted openly that such a physique as Merion's was thrown away upon a "parson." But he was well content with the career he had freely chosen.

"You think there is not room in the Church for my long legs and broad shoulders?" he would sometimes answer with a good-tempered laugh. "Well, you are in the wrong. If it were only for the sake of the village cricket and football, to keep the men and lads out of the beershop, I should have plenty of cause to be thankful for muscle as well as mind.

"And in a big scattered parish like this, with the houses sprinkled over it as if out of a pepper pot, let me assure you physical strength is not the least useful gift a country parson can be blessed with."

Certainly neither the parson's strength nor skill failed to receive due appreciation that June afternoon. The mowers, who were working "by the piece" as usual, eagerly welcomed the stalwart amateur's aid, while the onlookers bestowed many a rustic compliment.

"Eh, bor," remarked one bent-backed old fellow to another, as they leisurely raked, in his ear, "only yew luke at our passon! See how he lay about 'un? 'Taint the fust time he've handled a scythe, yew lay your life!"

"Ah!" The grunt was critical, but approving. "'Taint mosch as our passon can't du! Why, bor, he sit a hoss like as if he growed on it. An' when he've a got the pattens on in winter, he gare to fly over the ice like a bird, he du."

"Ever see un wi' a goon, Luke? He shute as straight as du Squire hisself. See 'un now, a-swingin' his blade as trew to time as ever yew or me did in the best o' our days."

"Eh, bor; an' here be we, a-rakin' just like tew ole women. How-so-be, it's what we've all a got to come tu, sooner or later."

"Well, we've a had our day, Luke Frost, anyhow. 'Ere, yew bor Bates; yer bring that there gotch 'ere! Maister Mat an' me, we be just as dry as Noah's Ark!"

And the two men proceeded each to drink a solemn draught of cold thin ale to the memory of departed days.

With exemplary perseverance and energy the curate swung his scythe until the evening shadows began to lengthen across the field, and the leaders of the mowers gave the signal to cease work.

Then he straightened his aching back, squared his broad shoulders, and swung his tired arms to and fro as he gazed at the golden glory in the west.

Squire Westwood and his tenant had walked down to the field together to inspect the result of the long day's work. Presently the curate joined them, and received with modest pride their compliments on his skill.

When he left them to fetch his coat and waistcoat from the hedge at the far end of the field the eyes of both men followed him with evident affection, and they paused in their talk, waiting for his return.

"Well, what's the man about now?" exclaimed the Squire, after a while. "Has he found an adder, or a hedgehog, or what? Never was such a fellow for collecting live rubbish!"

"Let's go and see," responded the farmer, and the two men, lazily curious, strolled across to the corner where Merion was still bending over a shady spot beneath the hedge.

"Well, Merion, what is it this time?" shouted the Squire, as soon as he came within hail.

"Come and see for yourself," answered the curate, without lifting his head. They quickened their steps a little till they stood beside him.

There, half covered with a clerical black coat, on a little heap of warm hay, lay a sleeping girl-baby. The old pink cotton sun bonnet had fallen, showing crisp curls of golden hair clustering round a well-shaped forehead.

The child seemed about two years old, and even the uncritical masculine eyes of the three spectators were struck by the rare infantine beauty of the little waif. The faded and outgrown garments were ragged, but clean, and the child's person was also scrupulously cared for.

Emboldened by the arrival of his friends, the curate gently touched one of the little hands. The rosy fingers closed around his brown forefinger, and he thrilled as though at the touch of a woman he loved. The Squire was the first to speak.

"Here's a pretty thing, and a very pretty thing; and who is the owner of this pretty thing?' as the children say, eh, parson?"

"You know exactly as much as I do, Squire. The child is a stranger—of that much I am certain. No woman in the village owns such a baby as this."

"No," assented the Squire. He bent more closely over the still sleeping child. "I don't believe it is even an English child. It is exactly the type of childish beauty which you see in so many Tuscan 'holy families'—the golden-haired North Italian type. I have seen such babies before in Piedmont and Tuscany,"—Squire Westwood liked occasionally to remind you that he too had seen the world—"but never anywhere else, I think."

"What are we going to do about it, inquired the more practical-minded farmer. "The evening is drawing in, and we must do something at once. The child has evidently been left here by some artful tramp, who is miles away by now. If you want to send over to Merton, my dogcart is at your service."

The Union workhouse for the district was at Merton. A cloud fell over the curate's face, and the Squire looked uneasy.

"After all," suggested the latter, "the child may perhaps be staying with someone in the village, and only have been left here by oversight."

"What do you say to this, then, Squire?" Mr. Lovejoy drew from a fold of the ragged frock a small card. On it, in clear, beautiful formed characters, were these words:

"Stella Arcangela Airaldi." Then followed two dates, one of birth, the other of baptism. Nothing more.

"What did I tell you, Merion?" asked the Squire triumphantly. "Didn't I say at once the child was Italian?"

The curate nodded absently. He was deep in thought.

"Italian, or English, or double-Dutch, it can't stay here all night," said Mr. Lovejoy, a little dogmatically.

"Of course not; but what must we do with it?"

The three men looked helplessly at each other. There was not a woman within sight to call; the village was a mile away.

The baby slept peacefully on meanwhile; one dimpled hand clinging to the curate's finger, the other hand thrown wide; the rosy upturned palm looking like some strange pink flowret in the grass.

The evening dews were beginning to fall, and a perceptible chill stole through the soft summer air. The young clergyman tried gently to disengage his prisoned finger, but in vain.

"You're in for it, Merion," chuckled the Squire. "Baby has adopted you, evidently. You'll have to carry her home with you!"

Merion laughed a little awkwardly, and his sunburnt face took a deeper tinge of color.

"That's just what I intend doing," he said, quietly. His companions stared at him, but he did not flinch.

"Why, man alive! you can't be serious! What on earth could you do with the little creature?"

"Mrs. Lee is a widow—I suppose she would know what to do with it," suggested the curate, half doubtfully. "One day I took her home a stray pup, and she was no end good to it, you know."

The farmer laughed. "Puppies are one thing, and babies another, Mr. Merion. Mrs. Lee can't leave this youngster in a basket in the back kitchen all night, or feed it on your chop bones either. Better let me go for one of the women from my cottages to take it for the night. Then, if in the morning we can't find any trace of the lazy scamp who planted it here—it wasn't a woman, you may be sure—we can settle what shall be done."

The curate looked but ill satisfied.

"It's getting very cold and damp," he objected, after a moment's pause. "It would take some time to get a woman here, and babies catch cold very easily, don't they? I really think I had better take it home with me."

As he spoke the curate gently lifted the sleeping child, and awkwardly but tenderly laid it to rest in his arms, while the other men watched him in amazement at his daring.

"You see, I get a lot of practice at the christenings," he remarked modestly, as disclaiming any undue merit on his own part.

"But, Merion, is it possible you really wish to take the little monkey home with you?" exclaimed Squire Westwood.

"Yes, I really do. I want to be quite sure she is properly looked after, and I know I can trust Mrs. Lee. You know my weakness, Squire, for all young things, kittens and puppies and fledglings and all sorts. And this is such a pretty little waif and stray."

"There's no denying that. And of course you found the creature and you have a right to do as you please about it."

It was certainly base of his two supporters to desert the curate, as they did, at the entrance of the vicarage grounds, but neither of them had a mind to be held responsible by the curate's plain-spoken housekeeper for "the master's" latest freak. So at the Vicarage gate, with brief good-nights, the trio separated.

The Vicarage stood well back from the road, surrounded by grounds far too large to be properly kept up on the modest stipend of the curate-in-charge. The vicar of Middleton "enjoyed bad health," so the village said; and in the case of the Rev. Charles Mayfold, the old country phrase had a certain unintended appropriateness, for the vicar had been far from ill-pleased when a slight inherited delicacy of the chest gave him a fair pretext for placing his parish in competent hands, and retiring to Rome, there to continue and complete his famous collection of medals.

The curate in charge had soon made himself friends alike among rich and poor; at the bishop's periodical visits, all the parish machinery was found working with a smoothness hitherto unknown in Middleton: no aggrieved parishioner made complaint; so the Rev. Charles Mayford had been left in peace among his medals, while Francis Merion found work for mind and body in the care of the large and hitherto sadly neglected parish.

Along the weed-grown drive the curate tramped with his sleeping burden, into the garden, kept tidy chiefly by his own labor, and in at the open hall door. There was no one in sight, and he entered his study with a cautious tread. Baby was still wrapped in his black coat, and he vaguely felt that he would prefer not to face Mrs. Lee, after such an escapade, in his undisguised shirtsleeves.

When he rang, Mrs. Lee herself answered the summons. She was a tall, elderly lady, active and upright as a girl, and her quick, decided movements lent an impression of capability and energy to her most trivial action.

Words she regarded as commodities no more to be wasted than time, goods, or money, and therefore she was rather a silent person. But when she did speak, it was invariably to the purpose.

She placed a lamp on the study table and came forward to where the curate stood beside the broad old-fashioned couch, and without a question or an exclamation, waited for an explanation of the mystery.

In as few words as possible, the curate told his tale. Then he paused expectantly.

"Do I understand then, sir, that you wish to keep the child here till proper inquiries can be made?" asked the housekeeper.

"That is what I should like to do, Mrs. Lee, if you and Mary could manage it for me," the curate answered humbly.

The widow stood silent for a few minutes, her mind busily occupied with ways and means. Then, without more ado, she stooped down and gathered the foundling into her arms with all a mother's skill and care.

"You shall see her again, sir, when she is ready for the night. Mary shall run and borrow a few things from one of the cottages near by, while I undress her by the kitchen fire."

How had Mrs. Lee divined that Merion would crave another glimpse of the little one whose beauty had so strangely moved his heart? Mrs. Lee had a "knack" of divining one's unspoken thoughts and half-formed wishes, which some people found extremely inconvenient, and which even the guiltless sometimes felt to be a little uncanny.

* * * * * *

That night the stars shone brightly down on the deserted hay-field. Not quite deserted either, for there, under the broad old hedge, a man, prematurely aged and feeble, lay trembling in every limb.

His gray head was buried in the little hollow where lately the child's warm body had lain. Sobs shook his emaciated figure with painful force; tears fell hotly on the long fingers twisted so tightly together.

Yet presently he rose to his knees, and lifted his hands to heaven with a passionate gesture as of thanksgiving. Then slowly and feebly he rose to his feet, and dragged himself patiently onward into the night, bearing with him, for all that was left of earth's joy, the memory of the fire-lit vicarage kitchen, and of his heart's darling safe in the arms of a good woman.

* * * * * *

One dark November morning, three years later, the Rev. Francis Merion was busy in his study preparing his sermon for the coming Sunday. At his feet sat Stella, now a perfectly bewitching little maiden of five, busily scribbling, with imitative zeal, in an ancient note book.

Occasionally she would pause, bite her stump of pencil, frown, or lay her finger to her brow as if lost in deepest thought. Never by a word or a sudden movement did she disturb her companion, though he, from time to time, would lay down his pen to pass a caressing hand over her soft golden hair. Evidently the pair were well used to each other's society, and the best of friends.

Before the curate had reached his concluding exhortation, however, he was interrupted by the arrival of a telegram. It was sent by the chaplain of a London workhouse.

"Dying man earnestly implores your presence. No time to lose."

Almost before the curate had grasped the full sense, intuition had told him that at last the moment had come which should lift the veil of mystery which still shrouded his little ward's earliest years. The next train took him to town, accompanied by both Stella and Mrs. Lee.

"You are too late," quietly said the chaplain, as they stood together beside a narrow bed in the dreary men's ward of a London infirmary. "He will not recover consciousness again, I fear.

"I delayed as little as possible."

"Yes. I did not think the end so near when I wired to you. He has sunk unusually rapidly during the last few hours. His one request was that you might be sent for whenever the end seemed approaching."

Merion looked closely at the face of the dying man. It recalled no memory of his ever having seen it before.

"Do you know who he is?" he asked his companion.

"His name's Giovanni Battista Airaldi. Evidently an Italian refugee—political, no doubt. He came to England in the sixties, I believe, and, like so many others, taught music and languages as long as he could find pupils.

"That is really all I know about him. He was brought in here a few days ago

in the last stage of exhaustion from cold and privation. Evidently one of those who would starve in secret rather than ask for alms."

"Has he a wife?" said Merion, with a sudden pang of fear.

"The people of the house where he lodged told me that the wife died in rapid decline some three years ago. There was a child, too, but he told them he had found a home for that in the country — perhaps with someone you know?" added the good man a little curiously.

Merion bowed his head in silence.

"Ah well, poor fellow! He has had a hard fight for it, but the end of the day's work draws very near now."

"You think he may live another hour or two?"

"Oh, yes; that is to say, he will continue to breathe."

Merion hastened to the hotel where Mrs. Lee and Stella awaited her return. Within an hour he stood again by the bedside, with the half-frightened, half-curious child in his arms.

On the unconscious face of the dying exile there had already descended the peace of the approaching rest. It was a striking face, beautiful in spite of the deep furrows grooved in it by sorrow and suffering, and there was no mistaking the likeness it bore to that of the little one who gazed so earnestly down upon it with wondering eyes.

The same well-formed head, the same oval outline, the same delicate but well-marked eyebrows, the same sensitive mouth. Under the coarse blue coverlet the wasted limbs were sharply outlined; the almost skeleton hands, long and shapely, lay outside, peacefully folded for the last long sleep. Even on that workhouse bed, a certain refinement and grace lingered about the dying exile.

What was the tale he had meant to tell? What the boon he had wished to ask? Only conjecture could fill the gap in the history of the little one who now, at the bidding of her self-appointed guardian, laid her rosy cheek to the pale but half-smiling lips, so soon to be finally sealed by death.

"Kiss him, Stella, dear; kiss him again, my pet. And look well at him, dear. Try to remember his face. You will be glad some day to remember it."

The child gazed long and steadfastly on the peaceful features. Then, all unbidden, she again bent forward and kissed the sunken cheek.

A shiver ran through every limb, the grey head moved restlessly on the pillow. Then suddenly the dying man opened his eyes. For one brief minute they rested on the little face so near his own—one parting gleam of joy, one sigh of content, and the exile had found a better fatherland.

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Giovanni Airaldi was not buried by the parish. At his own expense, Merion laid him in a quiet grave far away from the noise and grime of London, in a spot which even to Italian eyes must have been beautiful. He lies among the Surrey hills, where the heather blooms for half the year, and the gorse scents the spring air with its fragrance. Merion himself read the service, and the little Stella, grave and puzzled, stood beside the grave with Mrs. Lee. Then the three returned together to Middleton, and Merion felt for the first time that the waif of the hayfield was indeed now his own.

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"A young lady must learn to sew sir."

"And a young lady must learn to ride, ma'am. And she can poke holes in a bit of cloth and sew them up again when the blessed sun has gone to bed, but she can't learn thon to sit square and firm in her saddle over a bit of rough broken ground—eh, my lassie? What say you?"

"Will you be Miss Prim, and sit there sewing your seam this bright May morning, or will you slip on your habit and give old Skylark a bit of a breather? Look at the old horse pawing up the gravel out there! He wants you to come out as much as I do."

Stella looked appealingly at her instructress. Mrs. Lee, still active and keen-witted as ever, tried vainly to stiffen the muscles of her face. From the night she first took the little waif into her arms Stella had been the very apple of her eye.

"I suppose you must go with the Squire, Miss Stella as usual! But mind, if you are ever to be a useful woman, This and better may do; this and like it wont."

"What with riding with the Squire, and music-making with his lady, and grubbing for flowers and ferns with the old doctor, and reading Latin and French with the master, it's little time indeed I can get for teaching you any single useful thing. But there!—it takes all sorts to make a world, I suppose."

"A few more of your sort, Mrs. Lee, and the world would be a better place to live in than it is now," said the Squire gallantly, as he watched Stella folding away her work. Having gained his point, he was in high good humor.

"May be so, sir; may be not. There's both better and worse to be found in it than either you or me. I'll be there to help you change in one minute, Miss Stella.

"What I say is this, Squire, if you and the master between you haven't spoilt that blessed child altogether, it's just because the Almighty gave her in the beginning as much sense and sweetness as He gave any other half dozen!"

At seventeen Stella Airaldi was a slender, graceful maiden, bearing evident traces of her lineage in the wistful dark eyes which contrasted so strikingly with the red gold of her massive plaits. Her childhood had been a very happy one in the quiet old country vicarage.

Half the village united to spoil her—or so said Mrs. Lee, herself the worst offender of all. As for education, she had early had a special place allotted her beside the village schoolmistress, and year by year had risen steadily from "standard to standard," in company with her village contemporaries. When at last, with tears in her eyes, Miss Brooks announced that Stella could learn no more from her, no question ever arose of sending her away to school.

On all sides offers were made of lessons in various accomplishments; and the more serious studies it was her guardian's pride and delight to carry on himself.

The result was, that though innocent of every "crammer's" art, yet when Stella Airaldi began to mix with other girls of her own age, she had more often cause modestly to hide her acquirements than to blush for her deficiencies.

With Francis Merion himself the passing years had dealt lightly indeed. At forty-one he was still undeniably a young man, fond as ever of a ride across the country; the pride of the village cricket-club, still tramping about his large parish with a disregard of wind, weather and distance, which few of his younger brethren could rival.

Time had but mellowed his strong though simple character, of which his single-hearted uprightness was still the distinctive quality. In fact, in the eyes of his parishioners, Merion had one fault—at forty-one he was still a bachelor.

"That there Mis' Lee, she makes 'un a sight tew comfortable, that she du!" grumbled old Nancy Bates one day to her crony.

"He dunno' what 't be tu have so mooch as a bootton a-missin' by what I hear tell! It so be as he'd ha' had to live hard, like as a single man had a ought to dew—why, there'd ha' been a missis up at the vicarage long enow afore this!"

"So there would, Mis' Bates. And we'd ha' had a lady to coom in and sit an' talk a bit neighbor-like, an' bring us a drop o' somethin' coomfortable in case o' need, or a' ole bit o' carpet to put down on these 'ere dratted cold bricks!"

"That we should, Mis' Larkins! That there housekeeper, Mis' Lee, she be raight enow' when a body be rale bad a-bed, far be it from me to deny; but she don't fare to have so mooch feelin' as she might, when a body jist fare to feel a bit peaky-like, du she now?"

Whether owing to Mrs. Lee's good housewifery, or to other causes, the fact remained that the curate in charge was still a bachelor.

But the Fates, so long mere passive spectators of his peaceful existence, had at last grown weary of their inactivity, and changes were close at hand.

[TO BE CONCLUDED IN THE NEXT.]

AN EARLY LESSON.

"Oh! if I only had a pair of diamond ear-rings!" said Mary Allingham, a very pretty girl of sixteen, the daughter of a man in moderate circumstances.

"Is there so much happiness in diamond ear-rings, my dear?" quietly inquired her mother, the only person in the room with her.

"Happiness?" repeated Mary. "I believe I should be perfectly happy if I had them. You don't know, mamma, what a beautiful pair Esther Hawley has. All the school girls envy her."

"I'm afraid, my child," said Mrs. Allingham, "that if you had the ear-rings, you'd soon be wanting something else, for in a little while you'd get as much used to them as you are to your pearl ones. Besides, I don't approve of young girls wearing diamonds; so, even if your father was richer, I should oppose your wearing them."

Mary sighed. No one but herself knew what a serious disappointment this decision was to her. The possession of diamond ear-rings had long been secretly her ambition; but, aware of her mother's aversion to costly jewelry for girls, and doubtful of her father's ability to purchase such extravagant gems, she had let nearly a year pass before she could summon courage enough to speak on the subject.

That evening, when Mr. and Mrs. Allingham were alone together, the latter mentioned her daughter's wish.

"I saw the tears come into Mary's eyes," she said, "when I denied the request; and it made me almost wish we could afford to gratify her. If I had not thought it would feed her vanity, which is her one great foible, I should have quite wished it."

"Mary is a good girl," replied Mr. Allingham, reflectively. "Maybe, too, if we gave her the ear-rings, it would teach her a lesson. She'd soon find that happiness does not consist in fine jewelry, but in a contented and cheerful spirit."

"So I told her," replied Mrs. Allingham.

"But there's no teaching like experience, my dear," said her husband. "Though the world is many thousand years old, each generation refuses, as obstinately as the very first did, to accept the lessons of life second-hand.

"We all despise the wisdom of our fathers, and secretly laugh when they moralize, though, in turn, we are foolish enough to suppose our own children will give heed to us. 'Tis human nature, and there's an end of it."

"And you think we can afford the ear-rings?" said his wife.

"They may save us greater extravagances after a while," he replied. "One can't always deny an only daughter. Mary is sensible, and will learn, I hope, the lesson we wish to teach her, if we gratify her in this matter. In that particular it will be a cheap way to make her economical."

"And contented?" said Mrs. Allingham.

"Yes! for that's even better than economy," replied her husband.

So the ear-rings were bought, to the great delight of Mary, for she had given up all hope of them, and could hardly believe her eyes when she saw them on her dressing-table on her birthday. How proudly she wore them at the great family dinner that day. How she fancied on the following Sunday that everybody was looking at her at church.

But Mary, as her mother had foretold, soon began to get tired of the ear-rings. She found they did not make her as happy as she had expected. As she grew older and went more into society, she met girls who had diamond bracelets, and who were just as much more richly dressed in comparison.

At first this made her envious; but, as her father had said, she was both good and sensible: and gradually she began to see that, as she could not have all she wished, it was better to put a limit to her desires at once. She observed that such of her companions as were most contented, were also the happiest.

"Maiman is right," she said to herself. "It isn't what we wear that makes us happy; it is the contented mind within."

One day she entered the room where her parents were sitting. It was a cold, bitter winter, and there had been much suffering among the poor.

"Papa," she said, "I have brought you my diamond ear-rings, for, if you have no objection, I would like to have them sold, so as to give the money to the poor. I know you gave me the ear-rings, not because you thought them suitable for me, but because I had set my heart on them.

"I find now," she continued, "that I was unhappy, not because I had no diamonds, but because I was daily breaking the tenth commandment, and guilty of covetousness." She hung her head in shame. "So, if you please, I'll do without them, and be content with my old ones, which are more appropriate to your means, dear papa."

The tears came into the eyes of both Mr. and Mrs. Allingham, as they pressed their child, in turns, to their hearts.

Mary has since married a wealthy gentleman, and could have diamonds in plenty; but she has never forgotten that first lesson, and often alludes to it.

"Rich as we are," she said, one day, when talking to her mother, "there are many things we can't afford. I saw such a beautiful picture, by Ary Schaffer, when we were in Paris, and was tempted for a moment, to wish Henry would buy it, though I knew it would be a piece of extravagance, considering how much our trip had cost; but I thought of the ear-rings, and was contented to do without it."

"My dear child," responded her father, "I am proud to hear that you still retain your old lesson, and I will now repeat to you what I remember once reading when I was a very young man, and which I have never forgotten:—'We are ruined, not by what we really want, but by what we think we want; therefore, never go abroad in search of your wants. If they be real wants, they will come home in search of you; for he that buys what he does not want, will soon want what he cannot buy.'"

STARVING OUT A DEBTOR.—Many queer stories are told of the persistence and clever devices of the collectors of bad debts; but even a professional humorist would find it hard to invent anything more absurd than the method actually in use among the Mairattas—at least, if travelers' tales are to be trusted.

In their country—so they say—when a creditor cannot get his money and begins to regard the debt as desperate, he proceeds to sit "dharna" upon his debtor—that is, he squats down at the door of his victim's tent, and thereby, in some mysterious way, becomes master of the situation.

No one can go in or out except by his sanction. He neither himself eats nor allows his debtor to eat, and this extraordinary starvation contest is kept up until either the debt is paid or the creditor gives up the siege, and in the latter case the debt is held to be cancelled.

The laws by which the "dharna" is regulated are as well defined as those of any other custom whatever.

When it is meant to be very strict, the claimant takes with him a number of his followers, who surround the tent, and sometimes even the bed, of his adversary, to make sure that he obtains no morsel of food.

The code, however, prescribes the same abstinence for the man who imposes the ordeal; and, of course, the stronger stomach wins the day.

A similar custom was once so prevalent in the province and city of Benares that the Brahmins were sometimes systematically put through a course of training in order to enable them to endure a long time without partaking of food.

INTOLERANCE.—It is chiefly in the realm of moral life that men are intolerant of differences. They cannot believe that there are various standpoints from which one may regard virtue, and that what one considers essential another regards as indifferent.

There are some whose views on all questions of duty are unalterably fixed. Nothing seems to them uncertain or problematical: no doubt ever occurs to perplex them, nor can they conceive that it may be different with others.

Any variation from their standard they regard as absolutely wrong, and those adopting it as sinning against their own conscience.

Perhaps nothing more effectually quenches originality, fosters a spirit of conformity, and leads to hypocrisy than this narrow-minded conceit. It makes the weak still weaker, and imposes upon them opinions that are never convictions, and a habit of action that is only imitation.

A SELF-DECEPTION.—Some persons look forward to the enjoyment of peace as the result of the satisfaction of their desires. As a present possession they resign it as impossible—they have no time to think of or to enjoy it.

But, when they have amassed a certain sum, or when they have attained the office they are seeking, or when they have completed the task they have undertaken, or when they have made their name known in the world, then they expect to be at peace.

No Will-o'-the-Wisp was ever more deceptive for desire, like man himself, is ever progressive, and rightly so. One attained, another instantly takes its place, and, if the first does not contain the element of peace, neither will the succeeding ones.

Hopes thus founded are doomed to failure. Peace must come from within us, if at all. It it be not ours now, no future, however alluring, will be able to bring it to us. It implies a double power over circumstances and over self. To adapt each to each is the great problem of life. That solved, peace is assured.

COME SOON.

BY E. C.

Come soon, dear heart! The days are lone and long,
And each new dawning wakes my sleeping tears,
For in my breast the old sweet memories throng,
And hopes arise that soon are felled by fears!
With thee afar the world all desert seems,
For thou to me its one oasis art,
The one sole star that o'er my being gleams,
And now its light is lost! Come soon, dear heart!

Come soon, dear heart! I count the hours that move
In tardy sequence, and for one I pray
Wherein thou wilt return to me, and prove
That love is sweeter still through love's delay!
Didst thou but know that, as the moments pass,
I on the earth still less and less grow part,
That life may fall with thee still far, alas!
Thou wouldst not leave me thus! Come soon, dear heart!

Poor Janey.

BY M. M. G.

JANEY LESLIE sat disconsolately before a looking-glass, stirred in a pretty ball dress. This does not seem at first sight a tragic situation, and yet, owing to the peculiar circumstances of the case, it was so.

To say that Janey was a plain girl, even if the "plain" were underlined, would not convey an adequate idea of her misfortune. Ugly was the word, and might even be underlined; for such ugliness as this girl's is seldom met with in a healthy young person who is not deformed.

There was a perverse wrongness in every line and feature that baffled even the powers of expression. It was a face that the soul could not look through, or rather could not always be seen looking through.

"It is of no use, Mary," said the disconsolate possessor of this unlucky face to the maid, who was putting a few finishing touches to the toilet, "not even your clever fingers can make me look anything but hideous."

"The carriage is at the door, and mamma in the hall. Quick, quick!" a voice clear as a bell called from the stairs.

She seized her shawl, fan and gloves, and ran down stairs after her sister, who was as pretty a girl as anyone need wish to take to a ball.

Mamma, who had seated herself in the carriage, and was remarking severely that when she was a young girl, she had never kept her elders waiting, was the girls' step-mother, a lady whom their father had married late in life, with a view of having his children well cared for.

He soon after died, and Lady Lisle did her duty by the orphans in the most conscientious manner. She prided herself particularly on never making any difference between Clara, who was such a credit to her, and "poor dear Janey," whose appearance was so very unfortunate. It was in pursuance of this laudable determination that Janey was arrayed in white silk, and carried off to do penance in a ballroom, although she would have been much happier at home, left to the undisturbed perusal of the latest novel.

They had just arrived at a door with an awning before it, and a carpet rolled down in front, lined on each side by a row of eager spectators of the lower class, to whom a ball is perhaps more amusing than to the guests thereat, because their pleasure is not spoilt by trouble or fatigue or mortification.

So the girls followed their chaperon into the ballroom; dressed alike, all their outward circumstances the same, they were entering each a different world. To Clara a ballroom was a delightful place—the hostess would smile upon her; she could choose her own partner, and a little murmur of admiration was apt to follow her down the room.

Without being vain or self coupled (and Clara was neither) the consciousness that one looks quite as well as, if not a trifle better than, anybody else in the room, cannot but be exhilarating.

She was not a striking beauty, but from head to foot so harmonious and complete that the eye rested upon her with a perfect satisfaction. There were no problems to solve in Clara's life, and her sweet face beamed with serene contentment.

To Janey, on the other hand, a ballroom was a place of refined torture. A cruel expanse of looking-glass, fiendishly dissembled by flowers and ferns, at the top of the stairs, would cause her to come unexpectedly on her own image, made grotesque by an unsuitable attire. This would give her system a severe shock.

Then as the hostess greeted her with what to her quickened sensibility seemed frigid displeasure, she would feel positively criminal. She tried to make herself small, but her unusual height was not to be dissembled by any amount of poking, and her efforts to avoid being a conspicuous object were always utterly unavailing.

"And now let us find a comfortable seat," said Lady Lisle, settling herself immediately beneath a chandelier, for she liked to show off her diamonds. Her victim followed, casting little longing glances at a recess, half hidden by a friendly curtain, which the thoughtful hostess had arranged, in case anything should be just coming off, as she explained to confidential friends. Then, as Janey listened to strains of lively music, she felt an absurd longing to have some pleasure like the other girls, instead of sitting, forcing back the tears that would come into her eyes, trying hard to look as if she was enjoying herself immensely, and making frantic efforts to talk cheerfully with her chaperon, in order that that good lady might not feel distressed on her account.

In this endeavor she succeeded so well that no human being divined her sufferings. It was often remarked that "the good creature, Janey Lisle, never minded anything." Everybody was willing to admit that Janey was a good creature; but they spoke as if goodness was the commonest of qualities.

To be sure, when pretty girls are tolerably amiable, they are angels, although they have nothing to sour their tempers; but ugly girls are expected to be good. What else is there for them to be? What right have they to expect anything but slights and neglect? How very unreasonable it would have been in a girl of Janey's appearance to have any feelings or fancies or repinings!

"Oh, here is Tom!" exclaimed Lady Lisle, in a tone of great satisfaction, "Now you'll have your turn, Janey, dear. Tom never forgets to ask you to dance!"

This was intended as a most consolatory speech, but Janey had a struggle to subdue a certain rising in her throat; for she had her dignity, little as it was considered, and the insolent contempt of her cousin Tom's manner, when he executed what he called his "duty dance" with her was one of her sorest trials. Just now he was waltzing with Clara, and a handsome couple they were.

"It is a charming ball," observed a fellow chaperon to Lady Lisle, with enthusiasm, "all eldest sons!"

Lady Lisle acquiesced with a complacent smile, as she reflected that one of the most eligible young men in the room was entirely devoted to one of her girls. That it would be a match, nobody doubted, although Tom had not exactly come to the point, and Clara did not seem much to care how long he put it off.

"You must give me another round," he was saying, as, the waltz over, Clara desired to be conducted to her chaperon.

"Not unless you give a turn to my poor Janey. I will not have her put off with a quadrille," stipulated Clara.

"Oh, confound it! I mean—can't, you know—lots of girls I must ask, and Janey's such a log."

Clara bestowed on her cousin a look of mingled anger and disgust.

"You might keep your oaths for your groom, I think. I am engaged for this quadrille, and here is my partner."

So saying, she let go her cousin's arm to take that of a very young man, on whom she smiled so amiably that his smooth, rosy face glowed with delight, and he was afterwards heard to remark that Miss Lisle was a jolly girl, and no mistake; for the youth was occasionally snubbed by ballroom beauties.

Sir Thomas Lethbridge went and stood in the doorway, with his glass in his eye, gaping vacantly at a row of young ladies against the wall, whose hearts, he well knew, were fluttering with a faint hope that he would ask one of them to dance, and so he remained impeding all ingress and egress, looking as if boredom could no further go, until the quadrille came to an end, and an inspiring galop was struck up. Then he sauntered up to Janey and said:—

"Come on!"

"I don't care about dancing, thank you," replied Janey, turning red, for if she had not actually overheard the conversation with Clara, she had witnessed the little scene and perfectly understood it.

But Tom, who had made up his mind to do penance, was resolved to go through with it like a man.

"Oh, nonsense!" said he, and seizing Janey round the waist, he whirled her about in an energetic but most uncomfortable manner, and having brought her up with a violent jerk against the wall, reinstated his glass in his eye, and relapsed into vacancy.

Janey leant back breathless, giddy, her head throbbing and the choking in her throat growing more and more insufferable, until the distress did at last show itself in her face, and struck even Tom when he glanced by accident in her direction, for he never looked at Janey if he could help it.

"Come and have some supper," he suggested, as a slight twinge of remorse seized him, and, as before, listened to no objections, but dragged poor Janey, who at that moment loathed the very thought of food, down the back stairs to the supper room, in order to get out of the crush, as he explained.

But Janey knew that if Clara had been on his arm he would not have shirked the front staircase. It had not occurred to the hostess that her guests might prefer the back stairs to the front, and it so happened to be left quite dark. Janey stumbled against somebody and uttered a cry. They both fell and rolled down a few steps, but happily they were near the bottom, and she picked herself up exclaiming:—

"Oh dear! how awkward of me!" To this Tom cordially assented, but her fellow sufferer hastened to assure her that it was all his fault. He was desolated, but he could not make out the plan of these London houses; and to Janey's anxious inquiries as to whether he was hurt, only replied by hoping that she was not.

The stranger spoke in French, but not with the accent of a Frenchman. He offered Janey his arm, and they emerged into light and splendor. Then, of course, they looked at each other. He was a dark, thin, middle aged man, whose Italian nationality Janey soon discovered.

"What a pity that so sweet a creature should be condemned to wear through life such an ugly mask."

"But you are hurt," he exclaimed, as he saw that the arm which rested on his was severely bruised.

"Oh, it does not matter," she said, hastily. "Indeed, I never thought about that."

"But you thought of me," observed the stranger.

Tom seeing that the foreigner was bent on doing the polite, escaped with a clear conscience, and informed Clara that she had left Janey flirting away like anything with a Frenchman she had knocked down stairs—and on Clara's showing symptoms of incredulity, let his eye flap fall in the energy with which he reported his statement to be unvarnished truth.

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The man whom "Janey had knocked downstairs" was discovered to be a distinguished Italian patriot—one much feted on account of his heroic deeds. He was a soldier who had fought under Garibaldi, fought also under Victor Emanuel against the Austrians, and had won laurels in every campaign.

He was the most unobtrusive, gentle, and quiet of human beings, not an uncommon type amongst those who freed Italy—those whose heart was in their cause, and could not have fulfilled their great mission if they had ever thought of themselves at all.

Once introduced, his visits to the Lisles were long and frequent. He made himself at home, after the fashion of his countrymen, who, when they become intimate in a house, think it only natural to call every day, and do not wish to be treated with any ceremony. He never was in the way, and required so little entertaining, that Lady Lisle, though rather exercised in her mind as to the propriety of these frequent visits from a stranger, began to look upon him in the light of a tame cat, and to pet him as such.

"He is a nice, harmless creature," she thought, "and seems to find himself comfortable here."

It never occurred to her to think of him as a possible suitor for one of her girls. His age, which might be anything from thirty-five to fifty, his quiet manner, his worn, weary look, seemed to preclude all such ideas in connection with him. Then Clara was as good as betrothed, and Janey looked upon as hopeless—from a matrimonial point of view.

Count Corsi had much to tell of his country's battles and revolutions. He had fought with regular troops under Victor Emanuel; had volunteered under Garibaldi, and had been sent against brigands in Calabria. The brigand stories were the most exciting.

There was the history of those who surrounded a theatre, gagged the actors and actresses behind the scenes, and got upon the stage, where, when the curtain was lifted, they made a tableau with their guns pointed at the audience, who, at first, thought it was the play, and applauded, but learnt their mistake when the chief stepped forward, saying:—

"The first who moves shall be shot like a dog!"

"What became of that brigand?" inquired Clara.

"He was killed."

"And who killed him?"

"I did. It was his own choice. He would not be taken alive."

"You only did your duty," Clara observed, while Janey looked up in sorrowful wonder, that this gentle, quiet man should have spent so much of his time in killing his fellow-creatures.

Lady Lisle was dozing in her favorite chair, Janey sitting by upright, as she always sat, knitting a stocking for one of her numerous poor people, and Clara was sitting on a low stool at the Count's feet, and looking up at him with undisguised admiration, when Sir Thomas Lethbridge walked in.

He did not like that attitude of Clara's, and the calm manner in which she had greeted him, and introduced him to the Count, as if there was nothing at all reprehensible in her conduct, made matters worse in his eyes.

"The Count's adventures are so very interesting!" said Lady Lisle, waking up from her nap.

"Are they, indeed! Then I wonder you went to sleep over them, Aunt Hester!" retorted Tom.

Lady Lisle looked confused—not so the Count, for whose benefit the sarcasm was intended. He had been surveying Tom with keen scrutiny. He now dropped his eyes, and rose to take his leave.

"What's the fun of having a foreigner always in the house?" asked Tom. "He seems to make himself at home here."

"The Count is a very distinguished patriot," said Lady Lisle. "Mrs. Crauford introduced him to us, and he took her into dinner, although there was a very old baronet in the room; and I must say I think you might have treated him with common civility. He was so nice to Janey when she unfortunately knocked against him at the ball; and some men, you know, might have felt annoyed."

Tom muttered something inarticulate, which was unmistakably the equivalent for:—

"Perhaps you think it is all Janey!"

The subject was dropped, and he did not stay long; but as he left the house he came to the distinct conclusion that it was time to make Clara a formal proposal; otherwise she might possibly decline to apologise for her behavior in venturing to look at another man, on the ground that he, Tom, had no special claim upon her.

"Yes, I'll do it to-morrow," said Tom to himself.

When Sir Thomas Lethbridge made up his mind to do a thing, he did it. Therefore, the next morning he went at lunch time to Eaton Place, determined to secure an interview with Clara.

Fortune favored him, for Lady Lisle and Janey were lunching with an old friend of the former's, too dull for Clara to patronise, and who was alone with her strawberries, which she invited Tom to share with her.

"Strawberries? No," said Tom impatiently.

"You are as civil as usual."

"I have something serious to say to you, Clara."

"Well, say it, then," said his cousin, going on with the despised strawberries. This was not encouraging. Tom walked over to the mantlepiece and leant his elbows on it, with his back to Clara. Then, after a long pause, he appeared to be contemplating the figure of Minerva standing beside a bookcase on the top of the clock, with absorbed attention; he at last said in a low voice, and with uncertain timidity:—

"I want to know whether you like me?"

"When you speak to a lady it is usual to look her in the face," Clara observed.

'Oh, come, Clara, can't you help a fellow out instead of——hang it!" cried Tom, turning round in sudden wrath, "Will you marry me? Is that plain enough?"

"Yes, it's plain enough," replied Clara, who, in spite of her coolness, had turned pale, "but I beg to remark again that your manners are peculiar."

"Never mind my manners. I can't do the sentimental, as you know—it isn't my line; but very few girls have had a fellow so devoted to them as I have been to you. Dancing attendance on you ever since you have been out, always at your beck and call, filling in gaps at Aunt Hester's dull dinner parties; making a laughing stock of myself by dancing with that poor frightful Janey——"

"Tom, you brute!" Clara rose with flashing eyes. "Now listen!" she pursued imperiously. 'Some time ago, if you had asked me the question you ask me now, I might have said yes."

"I should think so. You gave me encouragement enough."

"But now—lately—your manners have deteriorated to such a degree—you have been so coarse and brutal—you seem to think every girl you see is trying to marry you."

"So they are—or their mammas are for them."

"I feel the honor," continued Clara, "for which you have destined me; but since, as you remark, you have so large a choice of wives, I have the less scruple in declining your very flattering offer," and she made him a mocking courtesy.

"Ah! I thought there was something up between you and that cursed foreigner, who has most likely got two or three wives already," sneered Tom, now at white heat. "Good bye Clara"

'Good-bye Tom."

* * * * * *

That same afternoon Count Corsi called and asked to see Lady Lisle alone.

"Oh dear me, Clara! This is very embarrassing," said Lady Lisle. "I don't know what you mean, mamma," replied Clara blushing deeply.

She had not yet confided to her stepmother that she had refused Tom, although of course she meant to do so; but she dreaded the scene that would follow, for Lady Lisle had set her heart on the match, not only from worldly motives, but because she was very fond of Tom whom she had known and petted from his boyhood.

"Well, whatever it is," continued that excellent woman, 'I suppose I can't refuse his request. I will receive him in the boudoir, poor dear man!"

John was accordingly instructed to shew the Count into the little room where Lady Lisle took her naps and received confidential friends. Thither she repaired reluctantly. The Count was standing, and was evidently in some agitation.

"Miladi, I have to ask a great favor of you," he began—"Your consent to paying my addresses."

It was just what Lady Lisle had anticipated and dreaded. She hastily interrupted him with: "My dear Count, before letting you proceed further, I should inform you that my daughter Clara is—is receiving great attention from her cousin Sir Thomas Leibbridge."

"I had perceived it—my congratulations to the young couple—but it was not of Miss Clara that I wished to speak to you. She is a very charming young lady, but her sister is, to my mind, more charming still. It is to Miss Janey that I venture to aspire."

"Janey!" exclaimed Lady Lisle. "Janey! Oh, dear me, Count, are you sure?"

These were not the words which should have proceeded from the lips of a mother; but the excellent lady was not gifted with very quick wits, and had never been taken so much by surprise before.

"Very sure that if I could win Miss Janey for my wife, I should be the happiest of men."

"Oh! Count, yes, indeed, I think you would—if all men were as wise."

"But the question is, could she bring herself to take compassion on a man so old, so worn, and of another race—another faith from herself?"

"You must ask her yourself, indeed, Count."

"I have your consent to do so?"

"If Janey reciprocates your feelings, I do not think I could withhold it," said Lady Lisle, who had now quite recovered herself—"though, of course, when one comes to think, there are drawbacks—to lose Janey so entirely—and then—religion. I have heard that liberal Italians have none at all. I suppose you have enough to support a wife in comfort?"

"I have a good estate in Italy."

"And you are a nice, wise, discriminating man, whatever your opinions may be. I really think it must be all the Pope's fault if you are not so very religious as you ought to be. If Janey likes you, you shall have my full consent to marry her." She stretched out her hand and the Count put it to his lips.

The girls, meantime, sat together in silence. Clara had told Janey about the morning's occurrence, and Janey had pleaded Tom's cause, and hoped that he would be forgiven, because she knew that he loved Clara.

Now all her sympathies were for the poor stranger, who had come, no doubt, to plead a hopeless cause. Why was everybody at cross purposes so? And she could do nothing to help. She stole a glance at Clara, but Clara's face was inscrutable. She was reading.

Janey turned to her knitting, and nothing at all was said. Presently, Lady Lisle returned in such a state of agitation as startled both the girls into exclaiming eagerly, "Oh, what is it?" for it was evident that the surprise was an agreeable one.

"I do think that of all the wise, sensible, discerning men, the Count really is—Janey, my dear, he has the civilest way to appreciate you."

"Me!" cried Janey, and trembled; then—

'Oh, mamma! you would not joke about such a thing?" she cried.

"Joke, my dear! It is no joke to him. He is standing there in a most pitiable state, afraid lest you should say 'no,' and you must go now, and put him out of suspense.

"He was so honorable, he would say nothing until he had asked me, and I really couldn't refuse my consent, although, of course, it is not a thing to do lightly, belonging, as he does, to another nation, and holding another faith—if he has any at all—but, still, if you like him, Janey——"

'Oh, mamma! I don't know—it is all so sudden—and, perhaps, it is only because he is sorry for me. He is such a real hero, he might be capable even of that."

Janey turned all colors, and then the tears came.

Clara had not spoken. She, too, had gone through a whirlwind of emotion in a few minutes, but the last thought was that she was now feeling, for the first time, a few pangs of that mortification which had been Janey's portion all her life.

For the first time their positions were reversed. Janey had never spoilt her pleasure with jealousy and reproaches. Should she now spoil Janey's well-deserved happiness? Clara came forward and performed the most heroic action of her whole life. She kissed Janey, smiling, and said:

"I wish you all happiness, dear, for I am sure you do love him, and what there is extraordinary in a man's falling in love with so charming a girl as you are, is what, I am sure, nobody is able to make out."

"And neither of us are a bit surprised," continued Lady Lisle, taking her cue, and telling the biggest falsehood she had ever told in her life, but for which her conscience quite forgot to reproach her. Thus encouraged, Janey began to think it might be true after all, and went to meet her lover.

When she saw him she was almost sure, and her doubts were set at rest, so were those of the Count; but the exact process by which this happy result was attained, it seems to us unnecessary to specify.

* * * * * *

There never was so proud a Belgravian mother as Lady Lisle at the end of that season, when a double wedding came off at Eaton Place, for Clara made it up with Tom, as Janey had hoped.

The good lady took her honors without parade, but with a modest sense of merit. She had certainly done well for Sir George's girls, and had even married off Janey.

A RUSSIAN WEDDING.

The bride and bridegroom in a Russian wedding have so many parts to play, that the wonder is they are able to get through the complicated ceremonies of the Greek Church correctly. The formula is not set forth in their prayer-books as the office of matrimony is in ours, and it is believed that no rehearsals are allowed.

In one case, says a correspondent, we were invited, with many others, to assist at a wedding, and certainly the scene was one altogether new to us. At the hour appointed we met at the residence of the bride, who, in her own apartment, was being decorated in her richest attire by her female friends and relatives, each having brought some small offering, and invoked with much earnestness the blessing and protection for her of their own favorite saint.

Whilst this was going on here, similar proceedings were taking place at the bridegroom's abode, he being assisted on this, his last day of bachelorhood, by his particular friends, who all came to rejoice with him in his good fortune. When all was ready for proceeding to the church, the bride was enveloped in a large white veil by her mother, who, as well as her sobs and tears permitted her, blessed her darling child.

Upon entering the church, they were met by all their neighbors and friends, and at first sight it seemed a scene of confusion—kissings and congratulations going on among the younger and more heedless of the company, and prostrations and prayers before the images of the saints by the elder portion. This at last was put an end to by the arrival of the priests, who, as they entered the church, presented a splendid and imposing picture.

Their dresses of cloth of gold were richly embroidered; their long hair was parted in the middle, and fell down their shoulders in rich profusion. They approached the altar and received there the happy couple.

After a slight exordium to them upon the duties they were about to undertake, a small carpet of velvet with gold embroidery, presented to the church by the bride, was brought forth. Upon this the pair knelt; lighted candles (previously blessed) were placed in their hands and the prayers were chanted by the priests in rich, deep voices—the people all bowing and crossing themselves incessantly; the rings were next blessed and exchanged, the priests still chanting.

Then came the sacramental cup—the priests, bride and groom alone partaking of it, which they did three times each. To conclude the ceremony two crowns were produced, massive and heavy with gold and stones; in the front of each were portraits of Mary, Mother of God, and of St. Nicholas.

These were piously and with much reverence kissed by the young couple, and then handed over to the groom's men, who, during the remainder of the prayers, held them over the heads of bride and bridegroom.

This was not difficult as long as the parties were kneeling or standing; but they were obliged to follow the happy couple round the church, they being led round by the priest, who had hold of both of their hands, he all the time chanting a prayer in a fine deep voice. The effect of this part of the ceremony was somewhat marred by the bridegroom's extreme height, his attendant being rather short, so that most of the time he was on tiptoe, which, of course, detracted from his graceful appearance.

In this way they made the tour of the church three times. When they had finished, the senior priest again reminded them of their duties; and, as soon as the bride and bridegroom had kissed all the images and holy relics of the church, the congratulations and kissings of the entire party were renewed vigorously.

On their return to their own home they were met at the door by their parents, who, with many prayers and blessings, offered them the bread and salt, which are significant of prosperity and happiness.

The young couple repeatedly kissed the hands and feet of their parents, and thanked them for all their love and kindness. Wine was then drunk to the health of the newly-married couple, congratulations were repeated, and the evening was spent in festivity, in which the bride and bridegroom bore their part.

The feasting lasted many days, and, as is always the case from the highest to the lowest, the newly married pair were the principal actors.

There is no running away to spend the honeymoon alone, in some dreary, dull place, amidst strangers; but their first days of wedded life are passed amongst their relatives and friends, who endeavor with them to make the great event of their lives as happy as possible—a much more sensible and rational mode of proceeding, we imagine.

THE art of obedience is essential to the art of command. He who has never learned the former is not prepared to assume the latter.

Scientific and Useful.

ELECTRICITY IN CHURCH.—Electric motors for ringing church bells are among the most recent inventions. The motors are small, and suspended from the ring in the centre of the bell which formerly supported the clapper. A hammer is so arranged that it will strike the bell once during each revolution, and since the speed of the motor can be adjusted without difficulty, the bell can be sounded slower or faster as the case may be. The sound thus obtained is said to be particularly clear and regular.

ALUMINIUM WALL PAPER.—The uses of aluminium do not seem to have been exhausted yet. It is now coming into use in the decoration of wall papers, many beautiful conceptions being shown in which the metal is a conspicuous feature. In floral striped effects the motives are printed on beautifully embossed grounds, which gives a burnished effect to the aluminium that is very desirable. An effective arrangement of daisies and fern leaves around the metal line is said to make a choice decoration for parlor or bedroom. The use of aluminium with colors, with or without the addition of gold, is spoken of as another special feature of this new class of papers.

WHITEWASH.—A good durable whitewash is made as follows: Take half a bushel of freshly-burned lime, slake it with boiling water; cover it during the process, to keep in the steam. Strain the liquid through a fine sieve and add to it seven pounds of salt, previously dissolved in warm water, three pounds of ground rice boiled to a thin paste and stirred in boiling hot, half a pound of powdered Spanish whiting, one pound of clean glue, which has been previously dissolved by soaking it well and then hanging it over a slow fire in a small kettle, within a large one filled with water. Add five gallons of hot water to the mixture, stir it well and let it stand a few days covered from dirt. It must be put on quite hot. For this purpose it can be kept in a kettle on a portable furnace. About one pint of this mixture will cover a square yard.

Farm and Garden.

MANY country homes are situated on slopes, with the well on the higher land above the house. But with such an advantageous situation of the water supply, there are few families that take advantage of nature's willingness to pump water into the kitchen sink for them. Let a pipe be laid from near the bottom of the well up to the ground frost line, and down the slope to the cellar of the house, where it turns upward to the kitchen sink. Where the bend of the pipe in the well is higher than the sink, all one has to do is to put a faucet on the end, and draw water at will. This principle of syphoning water on the farm ought to be more often utilized.

ARTIFICIAL DUCK HATCHING.—This is a great feature in the local native industries of Formosa. This is how it is managed: A long, low shed is built, mostly of wattles and mud, which has a thick thatched roof. All around the inside walls are arranged rough wood troughs, which are filled up with grain and roasted paddy husk, on which the eggs are placed as fast as they can be procured. In the summer particular precautions are taken, but in the winter the eggs are covered over with quilted coverlets, and far more care is taken to exclude cold draughts than is ever dreamt of in a native dwelling-house. The grain, which is sprinkled with a little warm water, sets up fermentation, and that with the help of the warm paddy-husk, which is continually being changed, hatches the eggs in about thirty days. By this simple and inexpensive process the breeder is enabled to sell young ducklings at about a penny each.

About six years ago my sister contracted a severe Cold and was troubled with a bad Cough. She became very weak and delicate and a physician was called in who pronounced her disease CONSUMPTION. She continued to grow worse and the doctors said she could not recover. A friend induced her to try Jayne's Expectorant. After taking a few do es she began to improve and kept on with the medicine until she was entirely well, and has ever since enjoyed good health.—L. W. MILLER, Dexter, Texas, Oct. 21, 1895.

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ON MAKING PLANS.

It is the easiest thing in the world to make plans, and the most difficult thing to keep them—for some people. There are of course not a few who can regulate their lives by rule of thumb, deciding precisely what they are going to do from time to time, and doing it; but, for the generality of mankind, the imagination proposes and Providence disposes.

Few of us indeed have the necessary solidity of character to keep to the most elementary plans—such as that of getting up in the morning at exactly the time fixed over-night. Yet, in spite of the way in which we disappoint ourselves year after year, we go on in implicit faith in our power to carry out the arrangements we make.

The making of plans is one of the earliest stages of mental activity, and the breaking of them is one of the earliest signs of human mutability. As children we began to lay plans, which vary in elaborateness according to our imagination.

It may be merely what we shall do on the morrow, and we discuss it with due intensity and with imposing seriousness, even though it be no more romantic an act than the dressing of a doll or the building of a fort; but when the morrow comes we have either forgotten our determination or we lightly set it aside to make way for something of far more immediate importance.

Or it may be that we decide what we shall do when we come to be of such-and-such an age. We decide what we shall do when we go to school, when we leave school. We even fix upon our calling, and we fix upon it with renewed earnestness each time we change our plans, which is often enough.

We determine, according to our sex, to marry the curly-headed boy or the flaxen-haired girl who sits in the next pew at church, though we do not even know his or her name. We lay plans as to what we shall do with our next nickel; but, if it comes to us in half an hour's time, we remodel our scheme altogether. In fact the plans of early children are no more than the sand-castles which are built up after each tide, only to be washed away by the next. It takes years of experience to make us understand ever so little the futility of our plans. A good half of us may never come to recognize our inconstancy.

We shall perhaps be told that these youthful plans must not be taken too seriously—that they are only specimens of childish exuberance and inconstancy. Yet they are, in their way, as serious as the plans we lay to-day. We are now only children of a maturer growth, and our acts and arrangements are relatively as inconsequential as they were ten or twenty years ago.

It is not only in earliest life that we deceive ourselves as castle-builders. We laugh at the intensity of our old romances and the fervor with which we conceived impossible plans; but, if we had that gift—which, in spite of the poet, we do not want some power to give us—of seeing ourselves as others see us, we should have to acknowledge that we advance very little in wisdom with increasing years.

Our folly changes as do the fashions, but it is folly none the less. What plans do we not now make that have no chance of fulfilment? Who of us is so wise that he or she does not daily map out the future with pleasant countries that cannot be possessed? Have you yet lost the faculty of living in the future? If you have, you have lost a valuable possession.

With the best intentions in the world, and the fullest opportunities, it is difficult to map out a week, or even a day. There are, of course, those self-centred people who, basing their arrangements on nothing but their own convenience, manage to approximate to a line of life and movement mapped out by themselves beforehand.

There are the business men of whom it is said that you may set your watch by their movements—the men who enter and leave the office at a certain stroke of the clock, who retire to bed at a given moment, except in the most special circumstances, and rise to the minute, without any deviation except such as may be caused through illness. They, no doubt, could say off-hand what they would be true to their word

From year to year their movements do not vary. Their annual holiday begins and ends on fixed days, and very possibly is spent yearly at the same place and in the same way. But these men are exceptions, and are better known to the novel-reader than to the student of real life. And they are hardly the kind of person to arouse a spirit of emulation.

Man cannot become an automaton without losing a great deal of the spirit and brightness of life. Plans were never intended to be inexorable—at least human plans were not, for the human being is by nature too short-sighted to see what is best for him in anything but the very near future.

But between the man who is incarnate fickleness and the man who is an intelligent machine there is a very great gap, and this gap is filled with every variety of plan-maker. There is, of course, somewhere on the outskirts, the man who prides himself on making no plans at all—the lounger who cannot even tax his energies to decide where he shall dine till a friend comes along and does his thinking for him.

There are men who, from choice as well as compunction, drift through life quite aimlessly. If we speak of the difficulty of making and keeping plans, it is not with the intention of suggesting that plans are to be avoided. Nature is perfectly planned, and the reason why we cannot imitate her is because of our limitations and—may it not also be?—because the strings of our destinies are held by a single Plan-giver. Yet in commerce, and trade, and professions, as well as in pleasure-making, we are bound by the whole force of circumstances to draw up plans and to abide by them as far as we are able.

We come into collision with circumstance frequently because we are not far-seeing; but we cannot therefore abandon ourselves to circumstance and take no share in controlling our destinies. All that we can do is as far as possible to learn wisdom in arranging the serious plans of life, to study our limitations, to understand our weaknesses, and to lay our plans in the highest and pleasantest paths open to our special characteristics.

The closing of an old and the openings of a new year are a time when everybody, however infirm of purpose, may be expected boldly to launch new plans with all the old hope. Far be it from us to dissuade any ofttimes-defeated maker of programmes from once more adventuring with a new series of proposals for making life of fuller worth!

This always remains to be said for the plan-maker—that, though no ingenious care can arrange the future and ensure the successes which we covet, the man who has turned over the possibilities in his mind, even while only idly dreaming, is far more likely to be ready to seize upon sudden chances, and to discern the true bearings of events, than one who plods along and never glances around and afar and gives play to imagination.

The most successful men are not the hand-to-mouth workers who take life as it comes, but those who see their goal ahead and go straight for it, yet are sufficiently alert to know when changes of circumstances make fresh aims imperative. The happy mean is plan-making without obstinacy.

ALTHOUGH most of us will never be eminent or distinguished in any way, we may be very sure that we shall do our best and fulfil the possibilities that lie within us much more through what we positively are and do than by any amount of not doing. It is in this region that each one must rise above all the standards which are erected either by law or public opinion, and form another and a higher one of his own, which will be different from that of any other person.

MEN carry their minds as for the most part they carry their watches, content to be ignorant of the constitution and action within, and attentive only to the little interior circle of things to which the passions, life-indexes, are pointing. It is surprising to see how little self-knowledge a person, not watchfully observant of himself, may have gained in the whole course of an active or even inquisitive life.

UPON examination, it is somewhat doubtful how far our boasted toleration of other men's views would be found to extend. In regard to those things to which you are indifferent it is easy to be tolerant; but where great and vital interests are affected it is still difficult to accord perfect freedom of opinion.

To extinguish anger utterly, were it even possible, would not be a benefit; but to limit, to watch it, to distinguish between the causes which produced it, and also to consider the effects which are to follow it, are really the best means of moderating it, and of making it, as far as may be, the minister of good and not of evil.

HOME-LIFE should be the sweetest. Keep out all bickering and strife. The world is full of backbiting, and misunderstanding, and envy; the home should be a refuge. The man is to be pitied who, after a hard day's sail amid the storms of business cares and fears, cannot drop anchor at eventide in the quiet harbor of a peaceful home.

THERE are no compensations in life more delightful and more soul-satisfying than the compensations that come from service and sacrifice for the welfare of our fellow-men.

THE only conclusive evidence of a man's sincerity is that he gives himself for his principle.

HE who finds company in himself and his pursuits cannot feel old, no matter what his years may be.

Correspondence.

C. C. W.—Lulu is usually a nickname or a pet name for Lucy, Louisa and Louise. Lucy is the feminine of Lucius, which means, "light."

Z. W. W.—Your fingers may become stiffer with age, but at eighteen we do not suppose they can be too rigid to play fairly well with practice.

H. H.—Calliope, in Greek mythology, is the muse of epic poetry, named from the sweetness of her voice. She is represented as bearing a tablet and stilus, waiting to record heroic deeds.

E. C.—The readiest way to find whether soap will injure the delicate skin of women or children is to test it with the tongue. Good soap in which the caustic alkali is neutralized by thorough combination with the fat, will not have a sharp taste.

S. P. T.—No specific rules are laid down in etiquette concerning the mode of treating visitors who make your house their home for the time being. Offer them the best you have in the way of food and rooms, and never express a regret, or make an excuse, that you have nothing better to give them. Try to make them feel at home by rendering their stay as pleasant as possible. This constitutes true hospitality.

NORRIS.—You should study several elementary school grammars and rhetorics carefully, not following any one of them implicitly, but comparing them where they differ, and if you are fortunate enough to have some frank friend a little better educated than yourself, who will undertake to note and correct your faults in speaking and writing, you will improve more quickly under such tuition than by any amount of unassisted study.

W. K.—In choosing a trade or profession a young man should be governed by his natural aptitude for any particular thing. The time required for learning one depends upon the study and attention given it. To be a civil engineer requires a natural talent and a course of instruction in what pertains to the business. One wishing to be a physician should have a leaning that way. He may study anatomy, chemistry, etc., under a physician as a preparation, and then take a course or two of lectures in a medical college.

THESPIS.—According to an eminent authority, the first playbill in the English language was dated 8th April, 1663, and was issued from Drury-Lane, London. It runs as follows:—"By His Majestie his compasie of comedians at the New Theatre in Drury-lane will be acted a comedy called The Humorous Lieutenant." The characters are next given, and it concludes thus:—"The play will begin at three o'clock exactly." So that in the time of the merry monarch the performances must have been somewhat in the nature of a modern matinee.

L. V. D.—1. Butter was but little known to the ancients. It is said to have been first discovered by carrying milk in skin bottles on a camel, the butter being made by the jolting. It is still made in many parts of South America by putting the cream into gourds, or skin bags, and slinging them across the back of a donkey, and then trotting the animal around until the churning is completed. 2. We are not prepared to state which is the most approved shape of churns, but will refer you for this information to some of your farmer friends.

R. M.—After giving the matter the most particular thought and attention we are compelled to state that to us the reason for your friend sending you a couple of matches wrapped in paper is unfathomable. Perhaps the sender, knowing that you were considered matchless in every way, determines in a jealous moment to render such an opinion valueless; or, again, in some idle moment, without malice aforethought, you have related some story which, seeming obscure to your friend, he or she has sent this little hint that more light on the subject is needed.

R. D. F.—In the game of chess, a pawn is the only one of the forces which goes out of his direction to capture, and which has not the advantage of moving backwards; but it has one remarkable privilege by which, on some occasions, it becomes invaluable—that is, whenever it reaches the extreme square of the file on which it travels it is invested with the title and assumes the power of any superior piece, except the king which the player chooses. From this circumstance it sometimes happens that one party, by managing his pawns skilfully, contrives to have two, and sometimes three, queens on the board at once; which, as you are doubtless aware, is an irresistible combination of force.

ELEMENTARY.—All the symptoms described are associated with dyspepsia. In every case of this kind the first thing the patient should do is to abstain from whatever food may have tended to produce it. Upon all points of eating and drinking you must be governed by your own experience. Mutton, fowl, and game are the most digestible of all animal foods, but salt or fresh pork, dried beef, tongue, etc., should be avoided; as also salads, half-cooked vegetables, cucumbers, etc. Oatmeal acts differently with various persons, and you must therefore be governed in its use by your feelings. Dyspeptics should avoid stimulating drinks. Take plenty of exercise, keep your system in good order, and it will not be long before you will be rid of the trouble.

A WOMAN'S FLEA.

BY L. C. M.

Ah, yes, indeed it's very true
That I enjoy a walk with you,
But should I like it, if I tried
To walk life's pathway by your side?

I like to talk to you? Oh, yes,
Just for an hour perhaps, or less,
But should I like the whole day through
To have to talk to—only you?

It pleases me to see you? Well,
I own it does! But who can tell
If I should once to see your face
Daily—in one accustomed place?

Have patience with me! Do not smile;
Let me delay a little while—
You see, it means my whole, whole life,
If I consent to be—your—wife!

Rex.

BY K. C.

THROUGH the long night I lay tossing and turning on my bed in feverish excitement. I could not sleep; for under my pillow, just within reach of my hand, was a letter—a letter of twenty lines, yet so fateful that because of it the whole current of my life was changed.

In the morning I had been dull and apathetic, existing rather than living, for I was the protege of a rich woman, who had adopted me from a sense of duty only; and although surrounded with every luxury that money could procure, and treated with as much respect as if I were a daughter of the house, I knew that I was not necessary to the comfort or happiness of a single soul. Within certain limits I might come and go as I pleased, be industrious or idle, happy or miserable—no one noticed it, no one cared, for no one loved me. But with the arrival of that letter a new life, so intense as to be almost painful, had begun.

Through an opening in my window-curtains the moonlight streamed across the room; and, although I knew every line of the letter by heart, I felt that I must creep to the foot of the bed and hold it in the faint light that I might read it through once more.

"My dear sister," it began—"eight years ago a letter reached you from St. Petersburg, bearing the news that your only brother Frank was dead; and after so long believing yourself brotherless, the present words will no doubt cause you a strange thrill, as if they came to you from beyond the grave. Your brother is not dead; it is he who is writing to you now. My period of exile has expired; the Czar has graciously given me permission to return home; and, by the time you receive this, I shall, I hope, be on my way to join you. I do not know yet by what ship I shall sail, nor at what time; so I cannot ask you to meet me at the landing place. I hope you will be a little glad to see me.

"Your affectionate brother,
"FRANK CHALMERS."

A little glad to see him! Had not my whole heart gone out to him at the first line? After living for years without kith or kin in the world, suddenly to become possessed of a brother—in such circumstances who would not be glad?

I did not remember him very well, for I had been quite a child when he left home ten years before; and when, two years later, the news of his death reached us, I was still too young to be much impressed by it.

Yet, little as this brother had been to me, it was through him that, at my father's death, Mrs. Curzon adopted me. Frank had been on intimate terms with her son Edgar; and when Edgar died, his last request to his mother had been that she should take care of me.

And what had Frank been doing all the time I had been living so luxuriously? Working perhaps, in one of the mines of Siberia. It made me shiver to think of it. When I first read his letter—it had been directed to the old house and was forwarded to me—I cried to think that my father should have believed him dead; but now I was glad that he had not known the truth. Could he have had any pleasure in his life—any rest even—if he had known that his only son was working in Siberia? And what would my life have been to me all those years? It seems to me now, that if I had known the truth, I must have found my way to Russia, and throwing myself at the feet of the Czar, begged for my brother's release.

What would Frank think of me? I wondered. Would he be disappointed in me? I slipped off the bed and drew aside the curtain, so that I might look at myself in the mirror by the light of the moon.

Yes—the reflection was pretty enough—pink-and-white cheeks and a mass of tumbled fair hair, from under which a pair of large and serious gray eyes looked anxiously. But it did not comfort me, for I knew that I could not meet him with my hair in such disorder, and that probably by to-morrow the flush of excitement would have given place to my usual pallor. I drew the curtain and went back to bed, for I was tired of thinking; but not until the first faint stir of awakening did I sleep.

Of course I was late for breakfast, and equally of course Mrs. Curzon was sarcastic about it and about my heavy eyes. She wanted to know if I was going to cultivate the æsthetic style of beauty, in which case she wished to remind me that the fashion for lean and hungry-eyed damsels was already on the wane; and so on, in a tone that always took away the sense of gratitude that I ought to have felt towards one who had done so much for me.

"I have had a letter from my brother," I said at last.

"Your brother?" she echoed, in astonishment. "I understood that he was dead."

"So did I," I replied, smiling happily. "My father had a letter from St. Petersburg some years ago, to say that Frank was dead; but all the time he was in exile in Siberia. I had a letter from him yesterday to say that he was coming home."

Mrs. Curzon was a handsome middle-aged woman, much envied for her wealth, much feared on account of her sarcastic tongue. She was always well-dressed, always calmly and superciliously indifferent.

To my astonishment, as I looked at her, wishing to see how she would receive my news, I saw such a change in her appearance that she looked almost like an old careworn woman. Then I remembered that Frank had been her son's friend; and it occurred to me, for the first time, that perhaps she had loved her son. I felt sorry for her, and said impulsively:

"Would you rather not see Frank, Mrs. Curzon?"

"Don't look so tragic, child!" she said, with a cynical laugh. "Why should I not see your brother?"

I could not explain my meaning to her.

"I imagine he will be rather entertaining," she went on lightly, yet with suppressed bitterness—"at least he will be different from the common herd of men. He must be that, after spending eight years in a Siberian mine. I did not think that he could have lived through it."

"My mother always said, too, that Frank was rather delicate," I remarked.

"You speak very glibly about this brother of yours, Nona," said Mrs. Curzon. "I thought you had almost forgotten that you ever had a brother."

"I have not thought much about him," I answered, blushing guiltily.

During the next few days I was very restless and excited, my mind being almost exclusively occupied with thoughts of Frank's return; but I did my best to abstain from speaking about it, for I fancied the subject was distasteful to Mrs. Curzon.

One morning, about a fortnight later, I had a telegram stating that my brother would arrive about noon, and I went very humbly and apologetically to ask Mrs. Curzon if I might drive to the railway station to meet him. She gave her consent, but so coldly that I fancied she herself must have wanted the carriage. However, by the time I reached the station the thought of Frank had made me forget everything else.

I waited for the train in the most eager excitement, yet half dreading its arrival; and when it appeared, I experienced a sensation of breathlessness from the thought that in a few minutes my brother would be standing before me. Almost before it stopped, a car door opened, and he stepped upon the platform—a tall thin man in a gray suit. There could be no doubt about his identity, for the only other passenger who alighted was a farmer's wife.

For a moment my constitutional shyness kept me still; then a great wave of pity swept over me as I remembered that this was the exile's home-coming. How passionately he must have longed for it through all those terrible years! How often he must have pictured the joy of it!

Those mental pictures could never now become realities, for the father and mother who had loved him were dead, and the girl whom he had loved was married. All in a moment I realized that this home-coming must of necessity be very sad, and that my welcome could be but a poor substitute for that he had hoped to receive. I went forward, trying to smile, but tears would force themselves to my eyes, help out my hand and said:

"I am very glad——"

But my lips trembled so that I could not proceed.

"Why, what is the matter?" he asked in a cheerful voice.

I felt ashamed of my want of self-control and blushed hotly.

"I suppose you are Nona?" he said hesitatingly. "I had no idea you were grown-up. You don't remember me, I suppose? You were only a little child when we went away."

It must have seemed to him very sentimental that I should be affected by his home-coming, when he had been only a half-forgotten memory to me for so many years; and I hardly expected him to greet me with much effusion. I do not know what I really expected, but I felt disappointed and snubbed, which enabled me to regain my self-control quickly.

"I have a slight recollection of you," I said; "but I don't think I should have recognized you. Have you any luggage?"

"Only this portmanteau," he replied, looking down at it with comical ruefulness. "I have not yet had time to accumulate many worldly goods."

"Will you carry that to the carriage, please?" I said to the porter who came forward.

When we reached the top of the little flight of stairs that led down into the road, Frank stopped, and seemed to be inhaling deep draughts of the pure country air while gazing around him in bewilderment.

As I looked at him, I was reminded of Mrs. Curzon's words, when she said that he must be different from other men. He was different, though it would have puzzled me to say in what respect.

His dress was faultless, his brown hair and short pointed beard were nothing out of the common, and his bearing was that of a gentleman.

Was it that the vigor and intensity of youth were united to a mind and a body strengthened and hardened by long and patient endurance? He was quite unlike what I had expected to find him, yet I was not dissatisfied.

Even when the porter had deposited the portmanteau in the carriage, and there was nothing more to wait for, Frank continued to stand for several minutes in a dreamy state of abstraction, until the impatient pawing of the horses attracted his attention, when he roused himself with a start, and ran quickly down the steps.

"I beg your pardon!" he said. "I wonder how long I should have stood there? You don't know how strange it all seems, or how delightful! You must forgive me if I'm a bit eccentric; I'm like a schoolboy home for the holidays!"

"I am glad you have come back, Frank," I said shyly.

"That is kind of you," he returned. "Who would have thought of your growing up such a very imposing young lady?"

The fact of having grown up appeared rather to disconcert him, and yet he seemed amused at it. I felt flattered.

"Mrs. Curzon has been very kind to me," I said gravely. I wanted him to realize that fact, and express his gratitude to her in a becoming manner.

"I am glad of that!" he responded heartily. "I suppose you have been having a good time of it here, then, and enjoying yourself?"

"Mrs. Curzon has spent a good deal of money upon me," I continued. "I have had a governess and the best masters for music and languages. We must always be very grateful to her."

"And she is kind to you?" he asked. His eyes had been wandering over the landscape, but now he looked searchingly at me.

"Surely what I have mentioned is very substantial kindness," I replied.

"You are quite right to remind me of it," he said. "I will not fail to express my gratitude to her for taking care of my sister. By-the-bye, I am afraid you will find me an odd kind of brother, Nona. You must teach me what a brother's duties are."

"But I don't know what they are," I replied, laughing softly. "You are the only brother I ever had."

I believe he did not hear what I had said, for a fit of dreamy abstraction had come over him, and he was gazing at the fields with an expression of deep sadness in his eyes. I thought perhaps he might be thinking of our mother, who had been passionately fond of him.

As the carriage rolled in at the lodge gates, he became strangely excited, and half rose from his seat to look around, then sank back with a laugh, and the next minute was leaning forward with his hat off, his eyes sparkling with eager interest.

I could not quite understand such behavior, as he had met me without the least show of emotion; but I came to the conclusion that he had been very fond of Edgar Curzon, and had probably spent some time with him at Elmwood.

"Nona," he said hurriedly, "need I see Mrs. Curzon when we first arrive? Can you not by some means put off the meeting for an hour or two?"

"If she is waiting for us, I think she would be annoyed at that," I said; "but very likely she will be in her own own room, and you will not see her till dinner."

"Good!" he exclaimed.

It proved to be as I had anticipated. Mrs. Curzon was in her own room, and luncheon had been laid for two only. She had evidently arranged that we should be undisturbed until dinner time.

Frank seemed much relieved, and said it was very thoughtful of her. His mind seemed to dwell on her a good deal; and, after luncheon, when we had strolled out into the grounds together, he asked me to describe her.

"I fancied from your interest in the place that you must have been here before," I said. "I thought you might have been here with Edgar Curzon."

He hesitated for a minute, and then answered slowly—

"I knew of it from Edgar Curzon; and thus it seems quite familiar to me."

"And did he talk much about Mrs. Curzon? Do you think he was fond of his mother?"

"Yes," he replied emphatically—"though, like most young men, he did not know it till after he had left her."

"Do you know, Frank," I said, "ever since I heard from you, I have felt sorry for Mrs. Curzon."

"Why? Did the news seem to upset her?" he asked quickly.

"No; she is not a woman to be upset by anything. She is always so coldly self-possessed that no one would ever think she cared for any one's pity or even affection—she is so entirely self-absorbed. But I am sure she must have been fond of her son; and she must feel envious of me because my brother has come back, while he is dead."

"What makes you think she was fond of her son?" he asked, in a low tone, a flush rising to his pale cheeks.

"Because—well, for one thing, her only reason for adopting me was because he wished it.

"And is that your only explanation? Does she talk of him?"

"No. But I am sure she must have been fond of him. Just think, Frank—he was her only son—she could not help being fond of him. Do you remember how much our mother used to think of you?"

He smiled sadly, and was silent for a few minutes. I was disappointed because he did not ask any questions about our mother.

"I am afraid, Nona, you will think me very cold-hearted," he said presently; "but I have suffered terribly in the past,

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The Ladies' Home Journal
Philadelphia

and I want as much as possible to shut it out of my thoughts—all the past—even the happy part of it—I want you to try never to refer to it.

"Yes—I will try," I said tremulously. I again felt very sorry for him. The past must indeed have been dark if he wished to forget the happy part in the hope of obliterating the memory of what was unhappy.

I cannot think how I came to do such a think; but we were sitting on a bench in a secluded corner of the pleasure grounds, where no one could possibly see us, and I wanted him to know how sorry I was, and to feel that there was some one in the world who cared for him. I stood up, and with a laugh that was meant to be apologetic, stooped and kissed him.

He was evidently very much startled for the color rushed into his cheeks; then he laughed too and caught my hands.

"Well, this is delightful," he said. "I had forgotten what it meant to have a sister."

"Did you not think I would be glad to see you, Frank?" I asked half reproachfully.

"I suppose I thought that, as we had not met for so long, and I was so altered, I should be like a stranger to you, and we should have to make each other's acquaintance all over again."

"But you forgot that I must have been thinking of you ever since I had that letter. And—and I have been so sorry—"

"What a dear tender-hearted child it is!" he said, as he drew me to him and kissed me gravely on the forehead.

I was very anxious that Frank should make a favorable impression upon Mrs. Curzon; and, while dressing for dinner, it occurred to me for the first time that, on leaving Siberia, he must have been almost penniless, and I wondered how he had paid his passage, and whether he had been able to get a dress-suit.

On entering the drawing-room my mind was set at rest on that point, for he stood by the fireplace irreproachably dressed, and with an unmistakable air of distinction in his whole bearing which made me feel very proud of him. He held in his hand a small portrait of Mrs. Curzon, which he had evidently been examining; and as I came forward, he showed it to me and asked if it was our hostess.

"Yes," I answered. "Is she anything like her son? I have heard that he was very handsome."

He smiled, as if the idea greatly amused him, from which I gathered that Edgar Curzon had not been handsome in any eyes but those of his mother.

We were still looking at the portrait when Mrs. Curzon entered the room.

Frank started as he saw her, his lips twitched a little and the lines in his face seemed to deepen, so that he suddenly appeared years older. It was not unusual for Mrs. Curzon to inspire a feeling of awe in the minds of strangers, for there was something positively regal in her whole bearing, and to-night she looked more stately and imposing than ever. But I had not expected my brother Frank to feel shy in the presence of any one, and it flashed across my mind that his present diffidence must be the result of his long exile.

Mrs. Curzon greeted him with her usual conventional smile, and said that she was very pleased to welcome him to Elmwood. I forget Frank's reply; but what surprised me was that he spoke with a decidedly foreign accent. I had not noticed it when he spoke to me. Was it another phase of his shyness? I wondered.

He certainly was shy; there could be no doubt about it now. It made me feel quite nervous to hear how he hesitated when Mrs. Curzon spoke to him, and to see how awkward and absent-minded he was. I was constitutionally shy myself, so I knew only too well how he must be feeling, and I felt sorry for him. But, all the same, I was vexed and disappointed.

There was no reference to Siberia or his exile, but Mrs. Curzon inquired politely about his journey, and he described one or two amusing little incidents that had taken place on board the steamer—that is to say, they should have been amusing, but he spoke so slowly and seemed to have so much difficulty in keeping his mind on the subject that there was no pleasure in listening to him.

After dinner Mrs. Curzon asked me to play and sing—probably to avoid the necessity for conversation. Frank turned over the music for me, and she sat at the other end of the room, regarding us, I fancied, with envious eyes.

I am very fond of music, and was so accustomed, when we were alone to play and sing to Mrs. Curzon for hours at a time. She liked me to pass from one thing to another, according to my own fancy; but I knew what suited her taste, and had learned a great many old-fashioned songs and ballads that were quaint and pretty, though quite out of fashion.

When I was once well started on these, I forgot my disappointment about Frank's manner, and began to enjoy myself thoroughly. I naturally chose the gayest and most light-hearted songs, and sang them, as I fancy the birds must sing, from sheer joy of existence. I did not dream that anything was wrong until I suddenly felt Frank's hand upon my shoulder, and looking up, saw that he was much agitated.

"What is it?" I asked anxiously. "Are you not well, Frank?"

"Oh, yes!" he said, forcing a smile. "But I am afraid that Mrs. Curzon is not quite well. Had you not better go and see?"

Mrs. Curzon had left the room.

"She will not like us to take any notice," I said dubiously; "but I will go to her."

Just outside Mrs. Curzon's room I met her maid and asked if I could be admitted. The answer was what I had expected. Her mistress had a bad headache and did not wish to see anyone; she was otherwise quite well.

In the meantime Frank had strolled out on to the lawn. I saw his dark figure moving up and down in front of the drawing-room windows; but he was on the look out for me, and came in directly I entered the room.

"It was nothing much, I suppose?" he said.

"Only a headache," I replied. "But she would not see me. I felt sure she would not."

"I think it must have been the singing," he said. "Did you not notice that some of those songs were such as a man might sing?"

"And her son used to sing them!" I exclaimed, realising the whole position in a moment. It was, of course, for that reason that she had chosen them for me to learn. 'Now I am quite sure she loved him!" I said, with conviction.

"Yes—I think she did," assented Frank quietly.

'She is a strange woman," I remarked—"too proud to let any one know that she suffers. But I am very sorry for her."

"I feel rather restless to-night, Nona. If you will not think me ungracious, I will go for a long stroll and try to walk it off," said Frank.

"Very well," I said, "but get back by eleven."

The next morning Mrs. Curzon breakfasted in her own room, and soon afterwards I was summoned there to speak to her, and learned to my astonishment, that she intended leaving at once for Harrogate.

I felt sure that this hasty move was due to the fact that Frank's shyness bored her, and the knowledge humiliated me.

"But there is your 'At home,' Mrs. Curzon," I suggested. "Have you forgotten that?"

"I had," she said; "but it must be put off. You had better come to the morning-room with me presently, and we will see about it."

She spoke in her usual way; but I regarded her in a new light now, and she no longer appeared to me, in her calm passionate superiority, above the reach of pity, but a woman capable of feeling joy or sorrow like other women, and like them, needed help and sympathy.

The next hour was spent in writing polite untruths that were to be sent around the county, after which Mrs. Curzon prepared for her journey; and when Frank came in to luncheon, I met him with the news that our hostess was gone.

"Deserted her guns, has she?" he exclaimed in surprise.

Frank's shyness disappeared, and in its stead he exhibited the gayest of spirits. He told me during luncheon that in Russia the fellows called him 'Rex," and that he wished I would call him "Rex" too—it sounded more familiar.

I knew that this was another effort to forget the old days, and did my best to carry out his wish; and though it was rather difficult at first, it soon became quite natural to me to call him by the new name.

What happy days those were that followed. What jokes we had together. How he would tease me and take me for long country walks that made me very tired, and brought a healthy color to my cheeks. How delightful it was to know that he thought well of me—that he even admired my taste in dress and my singing.

I began to have a better opinion of myself, and to discover that I had some conversational powers, and that I was capable of repartee. In fact, all my nature expanded in the unaccustomed sunshine of affection, so that no one could any longer call me dull.

In my case, I think I must have loved my brother for his own sake; but in the present circumstances I lavished my affections upon him unreservedly. He was a patient who must be nursed back to mental health by the most tender kindness.

The memory of those lonely desolate years must be obliterated by the happiness of the present. But, though I felt it my duty to take care of him, I could still look up to him as a hero; as love was strengthened by both pity and admiration, and grew very strong.

"Rex, I have something to tell you," I said one evening. We had had an unusually delightful day, and since dinner I had been singing his favorite songs to him as he sat in a window recess.

"What is it?" he asked, rising at once and coming towards me.

What I had meant to say suddenly became difficult of expression.

"Come out for a walk and see how the church looks in the moonlight," I said.

He went at once for our hats, and also brought a dark wrap, which he threw over my shoulders.

"I don't admire your taste, Rex!" I said. "What an ugly thing you have chosen for me."

"I might have brought a white one, but I had no wish to frighten any of the natives by letting them mistake you for a ghost," he replied.

A day came when I remembered that little incident and understood it.

We strolled down the steps of the terrace and across the wide lawn, then forgetting all about the church, made our way to a seat under some trees by the side of the river.

"Now," said Rex, "what is it you are going to tell me?"

He had thrown himself upon the seat and was looking up at me with his hat pushed back and with laughter in his eyes. I thought he had forgotten that I had anything particular to say. Taking off his hat, I arranged a stray lock of his hair with an air of patronage, which I felt that I was entitled to assume towards him, and said encouragingly:

"You begin to look quite young. I don't mind telling you that when I first saw you, I thought you looked—well, almost middle-aged; but now you are getting quite young."

For reply he put his arm around me and drew me down upon the seat beside him.

For a few minutes I watched in silence the ripples flashing in the moonlight. How beautiful the whole scene was in the soft light, with its mysterious depths of shadow, its vivid gleams of brightness, and with one long broad silver streak glittering across the river.

"I will tell you now what I was going to say," I began in a whisper.

Rex drew a little closer and stooped to hear.

"You have made me happy, Rex. Till you came I did not know what it was to be happy. I don't think I could go on living now without you. I should be so miserable. No—don't stop me; you must hear it all. I know, of course, you have your way to make in the world, and you cannot stay on here forever. But I want you to let me come and live with you and keep house for you. Oh, don't look so alarmed! I will not cost you anything; I can teach."

I was trembling with excitement and half crying, for Rex had grown suddenly grave, and seemed as if he would put me away from him. But I placed my arm around his neck and held him fast. I wanted to make him promise to take me with him.

"You are all I have in the world, Rex," I said.

'Child—Nona"—the voice was not like my brother's, it was so sternly imperative—"I have something to tell you, and I must not listen to you any more until you have heard it. Perhaps I ought to have told it you at first. I hope I have done no harm. But at least you must hear it now."

"What is it?" I asked in a subdued voice, for his strange manner frightened me.

"I will write it down," he said. "We must go back now."

I rose at once, and we walked half way back to the house in silence.

'I am afraid I must seem a strange being to you!" he exclaimed suddenly. "You will understand all when you have read my confession. Look at me, child! Are you prepared to be merciful?" he asked.

"Yes," I replied, forcing a smile. It seemed odd that a man so strong should ask mercy at my hands.

We entered the house by the drawing-room window and he opened the room door for me, evidently taking it for granted that I should leave him at once.

'Good night," I said. "When are you going to write to me?"

"At once. I will send the paper to you in an hour's time."

I was much excited by the events of the evening, and paced restlessly up and down my room, looking every minute or two at my watch, and exclaiming impatiently at the slowness with which the time passed.

What could he be going to tell me? That he had done something wrong? If so, I could forgive him? That he was still in the power of the Russian authorities? I turned pale at the thought, and then dismissed it as absurdly improbable. That he had bound himself by some vow to return to Russian territory? If so, I would go with him. That he was married? The thought that there might be some one who was more to him than myself was very bitter, and I made haste to reason it away, telling myself that it would not have been sufficient to make him so grave.

I thought of a hundred things, but dismissed them all; but still the hour was not up. It seemed as long as four ordinary hours; and I said to myself that, of all things in the world, suspense was the most irksome.

At last I heard a knock at my door. A maid had brought me the letter.

I took it with a smile of satisfaction and opened it eagerly. Now I was to learn the secret. It is strange how our lives can be altered by a few words written on a sheet of paper. When I had finished reading that letter, I had no brother. I had neither kith nor kin in the world. I stood alone once more, but with a new sense of desolation which was more bitter than anything I had ever felt before.

This was Rex's confession.

Ten years ago two young men went to Russia—Edgar Curzon and Frank Chalmers. Both being in a foreign country, they became very friendly. After a while both were suspected of participating in some political intrigue, and were exiled to Siberia—Frank Chalmers for a period of eight years, Edgar Curzon for life. This seemed the very irony of fate; for Frank was at that time in such a delicate state of health that to him even a year in Siberia meant certain death, while Edgar Curzon had an iron constitution, and it was very probable that with a short sentence, he would have returned to enjoy his inheritance at home.

The friends did what had often been done before. After the melancholy procession of exiles had started, and there was no longer any chances of their being recognised, they exchanged names, clothing and sentences. In six months' time Frank—my brother Frank—died of cold and exhaustion, while Edgar Curzon lived through all the trials of those eight years; and it was he whom I had met at the station on that July morning—he whom I had received and loved as my brother. I had no brother. This man was only Edgar Curzon.

I felt that I had been cruelly deceived; and as I read the clear concise sentences, scalding tears forced themselves into my eyes and ran unheeded down my cheeks. The last two pages of the letter made hardly any impression upon my mind; I was so overcome with grief and anger at the thought that I had been deceived and wronged, that I had lost my brother, that I did not notice that he said he loved me. Loved me, indeed! Was the manner in which he had behaved the way to show it?

The clock struck eleven. The household was still about, I knew, and he was probably in the drawing room. I would go down to him, and would reproach him for the shameful way in which he had treated me.

As I went downstairs, I remembered that unasked, I had kissed him, and my anger blazed up afresh. What right had he to let me kiss him. I found him, as I had expected, in the drawing-room; and when I had entered the room with the accusing letter in my hand, we stood for a minute facing each other.

As I looked at him then, it seemed to me that I must have suspected the truth all along—that I could not have really mistaken him for my brother Frank, the pale delicate lad who had always been so listless and fretful—and I was the more angry with myself for having given away my heart so readily.

"Nona, you are going to be angry with me?" he said, coming to meet me with hands outstretched.

"But I am angry!" I exclaimed; and my voice trembled with passion. "What right had you to deceive me in that way?"

"None," he answered humbly. "I explained my reasons to you, Nona. The Russian spies are wonderfully clever. On my release I was expected to write home to my sister. I had no wish to arouse their suspicions by neglecting to do so."

"But afterwards, when you were safe in England, surely there was no need to continue the deception?"

"I thought of my mother," he said. "During all those years she had believed me to be dead. I wanted to break the truth to her gently."

The thought of how Mrs. Curzon would rejoice over the return of her son added to the intensity of my disappointment and sense of wrong.

"So I have been sacrificed to your mother?" I said bitterly. "That was kind of you."

"But how have you been sacrificed?" he asked.

"Oh, of course I ought not to mind!" I went on sarcastically. "I ought to be grateful to Mrs. Curzon for spending so much money upon me, and not be concerned about anything!"

"I am very sorry, Nona, dear," he said gently. "I must confess that I did not think of the effect the revelation would have upon you, which was thoughtless of me. There is no great harm done, I think. Will you forgive me?"

"No great harm done!" I repeated indignantly. "No great harm done when you have robbed me of my brother!"

His face turned pale and an expression of pain passed over it.

"What are you saying, Nona?" he asked sternly. "Did I not explain to you that poor Frank's end was not hastened a single day by the change of sentence—in fact, his life was probably lengthened by it, as his work was lighter than mine? Surely you are not so cruel as to wish the change had not been made—to wish that I was still working in that horrible place? Do you wish that?" he said, as I was silent.

"No," I answered with a shudder. "But you must know it is very hard to think you have a brother and then find that you haven't one."

Rex laughed; his expression was one of relief.

"Oh, that's it!" he said. "I had expected something different." We had both of us remained standing, and he now came and took my hands and forced me to look at him. "Remember you have not lost me, Nona," he said.

"You! You are not my brother! You are Edgar Curzon!" I exclaimed scornfully.

"How do you know that it is so desirable to have a brother?" he asked.

"Because I do know it!" I answered indignantly. "Let me go, Rex! I will not stay and listen to you! You speak as if I were making a foolish fuss about nothing! If you had ever lost any one you cared for, you would know better!"

"Poor little girl," he said. "This sudden change of identity is rather trying; but I can't honestly say that I am sorry for what I have done. You don't know how sweet it was to me when I arrived here and read the sympathy in those dear brown eyes of yours. And ever since you have been twining yourself about my heart till all my happiness is bound up in you, child that you are."

"I am not such a child that I will stay to be laughed at by you!" I exclaimed, freeing my hand from his clasp and running out of the room.

What incensed me was that he made light of my sufferings, while no argument could do away with the fact that my heart ached with the bitterness of my disappointment.

If he had appeared sorry for what he had done, and expressed over so little sympathy for me, I could have forgiven him; but his conduct appeared to me to be utterly heartless.

On reaching my own room, I sat down and cried until I was quite worn out; then I crept into bed and went quietly to sleep. It astonished me in the morning to think that in such painful circumstances I could have slept. But I suppose at nineteen sleeplessness due to trouble is rare.

I had put Rex's letter under my pillow; and, as I was in no hurry to get up, I employed myself in reading it through again. Somehow it read differently in the morning light.

"Before we set out," he said, "I caused letters to be written to Frank's parents and to my mother announcing our deaths. It may have been wrong; if so, I am willing to accept all the blame. We did it in kindness. Frank had spoken of his little sister Nona; and I made my mother think it was my dying wish that you should be taken care of."

There was something pathetic in the fact that, in the midst of their own dire distress, these two young men had thought of their friends at home, and studied how best to spare their feelings. I could see now that through such thoughtfulness we had all been spared a great deal of anxiety and misery. Could we have had the slightest happiness in our lives if we had known what they were suffering?

When I reached the end of the letter, my cheeks began to burn most painfully.

"I feel that it was not quite fair," he wrote, "to win your warm little heart under false pretences. But, believe me, I would never have let you kiss me, my darling, if I had not felt sure that you would one day be my nearest and dearest. There—you must get used to the new idea of me before I say any more! I am going to Harrogate for a time to stay with my mother, who has been gradually prepared to receive me as her son. Think of us both, and of me as one who loves you devotedly. "EDGAR CURZON."

Why had I missed his meaning last night? What must he have thought of me when I appeared before him like a little fury? I felt so ashamed of myself that I dreaded meeting him again. I went over all the circumstances from the very beginning, and realized how amused he must have been at my readiness to bestow my affections upon him; I hid my hot face as I remembered how, quite unasked, I had kissed him, and asked him to let me share his home; and I made up my mind, in my shame and humiliation, that I would never meet him again. I welcomed the idea of quitting the home in which I have suffered so much distress, and, having determined on my course of action, I made haste to dress, so that I might at once begin to carry it out. The first news I heard when I came downstairs was that Rex was gone.

Well, it made no difference, I thought. I should simply be able to carry out my plans in a more leisurely manner. I wrote at once to an office in London, stating my capabilities, and asking the people to get me a situation as governess; after which there was nothing more to be done but await the result.

The following day I had a letter from Rex. He was anxious that I should get used to thinking of him as Edgar Curzon, he said, and forget that I had ever looked upon him as my brother, and therefore he would write to me every day.

"He need not have been anxious about that," I thought ruefully. It seemed impossible for me now to realize that I had ever looked upon him as my brother; and for that reason my conduct must appear to him most unmaidenly. Day after day I tormented myself about it, until I came to think that, in spite of his professions of affection, he must look upon me with contempt.

Then the news came that mother and son were coming home together, amidst great rejoicings, for all the village went wild with excitement at the prospect of welcoming them.

It was an exciting event that a man who had been regarded as dead for eight years should be coming home alive and well to claim his own. I began to avoid the public ways; every one I met deluged me with questions upon the subject, and looked at me with curious eyes to see how the news affected me. Even in the house I was not quite free from annoyance. The servants were much less respectful in their manner, and once I overheard two of the maids discussing my new position.

"Of course she don't like it," said one—"it's easy to see that; and 'tisn't to be supposed she would."

"Well, I don't suppose we should look very cheerful if we had had such a come-down," replied the other. "No doubt she thought she was going to get something handsome."

How hard it was to be alone and defenseless in such a world. No wonder my heart grew heavier day by day.

I had several letters from Mrs. Curzon, giving me directions for the purchase of various artistic ornaments for Edgar's rooms. The letters were in her usual style, yet a note of exultation could easily be detected in them.

"I daresay you understand," she said, "why I left home so precipitately. The man whom you imagined to be your brother reminded me of Edgar in every tone and gesture."

"Whom you imagined to be your brother!" To me the words read like a taunt, as if she were triumphing over me in my defeat.

The eventful day arrived at last, and everything was in readiness for the reception of the wanderer. I had already accepted a situation as governess, and should have quitted the house before, but that I fancied that such a proceeding might lead to scandal in the neighborhood.

I therefore donned an exquisitely embroidered white gown, which Mrs. Curzon had sent me to wear on the occasion, and went the round of the house and ground to see that all her directions had been faithfully carried out.

"How proud she will be," I thought, "to hand the estate over to her son in such perfect order."

After that I felt restless, and walked down the road to see what was going on there.

At the lodge gate stood a huge triumphal arch, to erect which men had been working half the night. Another stood where the cross roads met, and two or three women pressed forward to tell me that I ought to see the village. It had never been so gay; every house in it had put out a flag, and every gate was decorated with flowers.

A little lower down the road I passed the school house, where all the children were standing outside in rows, dressed in their Sunday clothes, and each carrying a little bag or a bunch of flowers. They knew me well, and gave an excited cheer as I appeared.

Then a strange thing happened. All of a sudden I too caught the infection. The hot blood rushed into my cheeks; my heart beat fast with excitement; I wanted to shout with the rest for joy that Rex was coming home.

People with smiling faces, were hurrying past in holiday attire, and I smiled and nodded at them as I walked along. Then we heard the firing of a gun from the distant railway station; the church bells commenced ringing, and everyone shouted and ran towards the lodge gates. I ran too, for I could not meet Mrs. Curzon and her son in the public road.

Presently, the sound of horses' hoofs was heard, then the shrill cheering of the children which was continued all along the road by the deeper voices of men and women, until the air seemed full of the tumult of rejoicing.

I gasped for breath, and looked around for some place in which to hide my quivering lips from curious eyes. Should I let all these staring people see me burst into tears at the sound of his voice? Never! I turned and ran blindly away from the sound of the cheering, until I reached an arbor in a distant part of the pleasure grounds, where the clanging of the church bells was the only sound that fell upon my ears.

"No one will miss me," I said bitterly, and sat down and wept.

During the next half hour I succeeded in making myself intensely miserable, and wishing that, instead of going to the situation I had secured, I could quietly die, and leave all the troubles of this miserable life behind. It seemed to me a great hardship that people could not die when they wished.

I told myself that Rex had entirely forgotten me, when I must have known perfectly well that he could not possibly come in search of me while he was receiving the congratulations of his friends and the tenantry.

After a time I heard his step coming quickly up the path, and my heart began beating wildly till it almost suffocated me. I withdrew into the darkest corner behind the door, hoping he would pass without seeing me. But he did not.

"I have found you at last, you runaway!" he exclaimed, with a ring of triumph in his voice.

"I had a headache," I said, coming forward with as much dignity as I could assume, "and I thought you would not care to have too many people about."

"There were only three hundred or so," he said, looking down at me with laughing eyes, before which mine drooped shyly. "Is yours, Nona, the only tongue that will not bid me welcome?"

I raised my eyes to his, and all the bitterness and anger and disappointment died out of my heart at once and for ever.

"Rex!"

It was little more than an inarticulate cry, but we understood each other. I was no longer alone in the world; my heart had found its home.

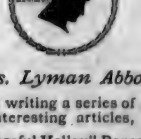
Of course it created a great sensation in the neighborhood when it became know that Edgar Curzon was to marry his mother's protegee; and many mothers of marriageable daughters pitied him exceedingly, for it was very plain, they said, that Mrs. Curzon had him completely under her thumb, and he could not help himself in the matter. But every one at Elmwood was happy enough to let them talk as they pleased.

At Home and Abroad.

According to the strict creed of the epicure even the color of a dish is a matter for consideration. For instance, during warm weather a soup should be either white, pale amber, or of a delicate green like the early leaves. After a white soup a salmon, a lobster, or a white fish, with coral or emerald sauce, should invariably follow. The succession of such harmonizing courses is a regular matter of study with the true gourmet.

It is popularly supposed that the interest in bull-fighting in Spain is lagging, but the facts of the case indicate that, if anything, popular interest is more intense than ever. The remuneration received by the matadors ranks with that obtained by some of the leading operatic singers in the country. Last year the least renowned matadors received about $400 for each fight in which they took part, while the more famous were paid sometimes $800.

A foreigner in Japan cannot obtain a patent for an invention except by fraud. If a patent were obtained by a false representation that a Japanese citizen was the inventor, and it was discovered that he was not, the patent would be at once cancelled. It is precisely the same with trade-marks and designs. The result is that all goods of foreign manufacture the label of which is worth copying, can be bought all over Japan of Japanese manufacture, and considerably under the cost of the genuine article.



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Our Young Folks.

THE WHITE MOLE.

BY A. N.

OWLEYSKIN was a mole that had been born with a whiter fur than his brothers and sisters—a circumstance, odd as it may seem, that procured him his parents' dislike.

This was hard, and many a mole's temper (never very good at the best of times) would have been completely ruined by such a course of treatment, but Owleyskin had, happily, a humble opinion of himself; he was not in the least jealous, and though he keenly felt the unkindness of his parents, he did not wonder at their avoiding such a hideous object as he believed himself to be, and was grateful for every mite of affection which was granted him.

He was left at home in the nursery when the brothers were taken to see the father's fortress, at some little distance, consisting of a circular hole with two galleries above it, constructed in such a clever way that it was more like a labyrinth than anything else; and once the youngsters were inside they could never have found their way out again if they had not been guided.

They raced up and down the long passages in great delight, playing hide-and-seek, and learning the way down to the little stream which ran close by; but when they returned home, Owleyskin ran to meet them, and was so interested in hearing of all they had seen, that Sharpnose had actually the condescension to remark, "Perhaps some day when father is out, and cannot be annoyed by seeing you, I might take you over there to see for yourself."

When the young moles began to learn how to procure food, it was great fun to watch them; following their mother's example, they rushed like a set of little maniacs at the ground, first digging their noses in, and then scooping out the earth with frantic haste by means of their long claws, snifling and poking in all directions, as if it were a matter of life or death as to which of them should catch the first worm; but there was some excuse for these little fellows being in a hurry, as, if a mole is obliged to do without food for more than three or four hours at a time, he will die.

Owleyskin's white coat did not prevent his being just as skilful as his brothers, if not more so. He was always willing to share his food with his companions, and, above all, with his mother, who, however, still regarded him with dislike and contempt.

Moles never take things easy, so the mother was not much surprised one night when she heard her spouse scrambling and rushing down the tunnel which led to the nursery, but he shuffled hastily in, and giving his beautiful fur a shake, blurted out, "Come with me quick, or you'll be lost!"

"Lost?" echoed every voice, in different keys. "Why?" "What?" "Where is the danger?"

"The floods! the floods!" cried old Mr. Mole, breathlessly. "My fortress is already under water; quick, quick! lose not a moment." And, turning rapidly, he hurried frantically out again, followed by his family.

The news was indeed true; a long continuance of wet weather had swollen the little brook, it had now overflowed the adjacent fields, and already submerged most of the dwellings of the moles who burrowed there; a broad sheet of water surrounded the island on which the animals now stood, and separated them from dry land.

"Father, dear," squeaked Groper, piteously, "what will become of us?"

"We shall swim across in no time; cheer up, and come on," he replied very sharply, and rushed boldly into the deep water.

All the young ones followed their parent's lead, while the mother came last to help the straggliers in the rear, but very soon it became apparent that none of the young ones could swim half so well as Owleyskin.

He cut through the water in a masterly style, and on reaching the shore he perceived that his mother had some difficulty in supporting his brother Muncher, who was the weakest of the party; so he immediately plunged in again, and by his timely aid assisted her to land safely; but instead of thanks and praises awaiting him, his father seemed rather disgusted at his slighted child having distanced his more beautiful brothers, and called to all, in a harsh voice, to come and help him to dig a new passage and make a home in which he could hide Owleyskin, for fear that any of the new neighbors might chance to see his ugly son.

The patient little mole worked as hard as he could at the abode which was to be his own prison, and when he saw his brothers cuddling up to their mother and fast asleep, again he felt that it was well nothing had happened to them, even though he had no one to care for him.

Owleyskin had a great respect and admiration for his father, whom he looked upon as a prince of moles, and whenever he could do so without being perceived, he followed his energetic parent at a safe distance, in order to observe all his motions, and to learn what he could by his example.

One morning, after the usual three hours' sleep, Mr. Mole arose, and was lumbering down a passage which led towards some water, that was common property among the community, when he met a stranger running in the opposite direction.

The tunnels were of course too narrow to admit of a pair of moles passing each other, but the rules of politeness always agreed that, in a case like this, the weaker mole should retire to one of the side galleries, and allow his more powerful rival to proceed on his way; however, the stranger being about the same size as Owleyskin's father, had evidently no intention of beating a retreat.

The enemies glared at each other for a moment, and then rushed together with terrible force. Their formidable claws were put into requisition, and they fought furiously, but the passage was too narrow to allow of their exerting all their powers, and little by little Owleyskin's father pushed his antagonist backwards, until both of them were in the open air.

Then, indeed, the combat began in real earnest; the little furies, animated with the deadliest hatred, bit, tore, and scratched each other like mad creatures. Sometimes one would hold on for a time like a bulldog, heedless of the wounds inflicted by the dreadful nails of his adversary, and then, when obliged to let go, would only return more eager to the battle.

Owleyskin, in the meantime, watched the fight from the opening of the hole, trembling in every limb, but afraid to interfere. Suddenly he discerned an object moving at a short distance, and on bringing his eyes forward and straining them to their fullest extent, he saw that a large adder was gliding stealthily towards the duelists, who were far too much occupied with their furious combat to see their mutual enemy.

Owleyskin's mind was made up in a moment—he must separate them at all hazards; so, scrambling out of the hole, he rushed to his father, and began to beg and entreat him to seek safety in flight, but it was not until Owleyskin had laid hold of him by one of his hind legs and pulled until he nearly threw him down, that the enraged animal turned, and was just rushing in mad fury upon his unfortunate child, when he caught sight of the adder.

With a squeal of rage and disappointment, he tumbled, rather than ran, into his hole, followed by his son, who had, however, only just time to scramble into the tunnel before the adder reached it; but finding the other mole outside, the snake was evidently satisfied with making his repast upon it, as he did not pursue the chase any farther.

When Owleyskin overtook his father, he found him resting in his fortress, panting from his late exertions, but burning with indignation at the idea of his enemy having escaped him.

Owleyskin shrank away from his parent in terror and disgust; but then his kind heart reproached him, and stealing up, he said, "Father, can I help to stop your neck bleeding?"

"No; I don't mind it," answered Mr. Mole, savagely. "Go and get me some worms. I'm tired, but I can't sleep till I've had some dinner."

And, as the despised animal shambled off obediently, his father muttered, "If the fellow were only a decent color, he wouldn't be so bad a chap."

Some days after this last occurrence, Sharpnose, Muncher and Groper entered the nursery in great dismay, and announced that there was no water. This seemed strange, but the reason was simple enough—the pond which had supplied them for a long time, had been drained; and as water is absolutely necessary for moles, some plan for securing the element must be at once devised and executed.

A council of war was held, and the meeting proved rather a stormy one; for everyone was in such a hurry to state his own opinions, that he was ready to scrape the nose of anyone who dared to put in his word.

The younger members of the community, including our hero's three brothers, settled to go off on their own account, to find some stream or pool, and set up houses for themselves; whilst the older moles, not wishing to change their quarters again, determined to dig a number of wells.

Owleyskin remained near his parents; he had no wish to try fresh scenes, and meet with new reproaches and insults from moles which had never seen him before.

"Better stay with those who are accustomed to my frightful figure," he thought, sorrowfully, and after taking leave of his playfellows, he directed all his energies to the work, which progressed rapidly, for after the neat little wells had been scooped out, the moles had plenty of water for a long time to come.

When the others had taken their departure, and the father and mother could no longer compare Owleyskin with his more fortunate brothers, they did not treat him quite so harshly.

However, he was not destined to see much more of his father, who one night wandered forth, and an owl which had been quarrying the field, swooped down with noiseless wings on Mr. Mole and speedily put an end to his fierce and cruel existence.

When Owleyskin heard of his father's untimely end, his first thoughts were for his mother and her sorrow, and hastening to her, he gave all his energies to the task of assuaging her grief if possible; and at first Mrs. Mole seemed soothed by his attentions, and grateful for the love which had never cooled towards her; but when the first bitterness of her bereavement had worn off, and the friends and neighbors who came to console her derided her son as usual, her worst feelings got the better of her again, and she showed Owleyskin so plainly that she would prefer him to leave her, that, with an aching heart, he went to live in a lonely fortress he had constructed for himself.

Not many days elapsed, however, before a message reached him to the effect that his mother was ill and wished to see him.

On hurrying to her as fast as possible, he found her in a pitiable state. She had eaten poisoned worms which had been set by the gamekeeper, and death was inevitable.

In all her agonies, and when deserted by her late companions, her mind reverted to her despised son—he, at least, would not forsake her; and when Owleyskin arrived, he found his mother dying indeed, but prepared to welcome him with an affection which she had never shown to him when in health.

Her last moments were soothed by the attentions of her devoted offspring, and she died with his claws clasped affectionately in hers.

When thus the last of his family had departed, poor Owleyskin thought his duty was done, and that now the best he could do would be to retire from the sight of those to whom he was so obnoxious, and seek a home where no one would be troubled by his color; but this was not to be his fate.

One day an enthusiastic naturalist, accompanied by his dog, happened to come across the white mole, and before he had time to burrow out of sight they had secured him.

The naturalist's delight exceeded all bounds; he almost screamed with rapture as he fondled his prize, exclaiming on his beauty and rarity, and then he carried Owleyskin off, to keep and pet as long as he lived, and after death to stuff him, and place him in a museum. Great was the astonishment among the community of moles when they heard of their companion's elevation.

"A beauty! a prize!" they cried, one and all. "Who would have believed it? However, of course, if that great man said so, it must be true."

So they called a council, and unanimously voted that in order that no one should forget their distinguished kinsman, a public meeting should be held on each anniversary of his capture, at which the oldest mole in the settlement should loudly proclaim with all due gravity, and through a trumpet made of a bulrush, the glories of Owleyskin.

TRUE economy of time recognizes the limits of human endurance and the varied needs of human nature. It is a most short-sighted policy that sacrifices the health and well-being of the worker to the supposed good of the worker. The master who overtasks his men not only injures them, but depreciates the value he hopes to obtain from them.

The World's Events.

One pound of sheep's wool is capable of producing one yard of cloth.

A doctor asserts that the growth of young children takes place when they are asleep.

No beer is allowed to leave the best German breweries until after it has been made three months.

Arkansas has a town named Credit, Iowa one named What Cheer, and Florida one called Hurrah.

A toboggan slide in St. Moritz, Switzerland, is three-quarters of a mile long. The descent is made in seventy-one seconds.

The longest reign on record occurs in the history of France—that of Louis XIV.—which lasted seventy-two years, from 1643 to 1715.

In Germany all employers are obliged to insure their employes, even when the employment is temporary and unpaid.

All birds when perched on trees or bushes serve as weathercocks, as they invariably arrange themselves with their heads to the wind.

Teapots are used in China only by the poor. Among the wealthy it is customary to put the tea leaves in each cup and pour water on them.

It is noted that the women of the royal families of Europe are, on the average, much stronger mentally and physically than the men.

Artificial legs and arms were in use in Egypt as early as B. C. 700. They were made by the priests, who were the physicians at that early time.

Pneumatic boxing gloves are an improvement over the old style, as they can be made hard or soft by forcing air into their backs through a valve in the wrist.

The little island of St. Helena is said to be the smallest diocese in the world. There is a Bishop, Dr. Thomas Welby, whose annual salary amounts to only $800. There are also three clergymen.

A young man began work in a Kansas City hardware store a few years ago who was supposed to be in the last stages of consumption. He now explains that his robust condition is due to the iron absorbed into his system in minute particles from handling the goods.

It may not be generally known that when a person falls into the water a common felt hat may be made use of as a life-preserver, and by placing the hat upon the water brim down, with the arm round it pressing it slightly to the breast, it will bear a man up for hours.

It is said that in France there is an international band of bicycle thieves, who have warehouses for the storage and sale of machines in all the large towns of Europe. A bicycle stolen in one country is sent to another, and the police are never able to recover it.

In the sixteenth century the average length of a doctor's life was thirty-six years and five months, in the seventeenth century it was forty-five years and eight months, in the eighteenth century forty-nine years and eight months, and in the nineteenth century, fifty-six years and seven months.

Pope Leo made eight hogsheads of wine this year from the vineyard he had set out in the Vatican gardens. A small part of the wine is reserved for his own use, another portion is sent to churches to be used at mass, and the rest is sold. The Pope is proud of the profits of his agricultural enterprise, and intends to plant more vines in the Vatican and at Castel Gandolfo.

Some of the comic actors of Italy sometimes amuse their patrons by exploiting the syllable "oh." Out of a word that is only a single vowel sound they can create surprising effects by a trick of articulation, varying the key, volume, accent, length, emphasis, and accompanying manner and facial expression through the whole gamut of different meanings.

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The Ladies' Home Journal
Philadelphia

TO THE OTHER SIDE.

And I sit and think when the sunset's gold
Is flushing river and hill and shore,
I shall one day stand by the water cold,
And list for the sound of the boatman's oar;
I shall watch for a gleam of the flapping sail,
I shall hear the boat as it gains the strand,
I shall pass from sight with the boatman pale
To the better shore of the spirit land.
I shall know the loved who have gone before,
And joyfully sweet will the meeting be,
When over the water, the peaceful river,
The Angel of Death shall carry me.

WITH THE SULTAN.

At what is known as the Bairam festivities which occur generally some time in June, all classes from the rank of colonel upward in Turkey has the right to attend the Sultan's reception in Constantinople. A lady, the wife of a foreign ambassador, writing of one of these events says:

We found on crossing the garden that the Sultan had already arrived, and we had not seen what is the most beautiful sight of the Bairam reception earlier in the year, his riding into the palace on a white horse covered with jeweled trappings, surrounded by all his court officials, superbly mounted. As the Sultan slays a ram directly he dismounts on this occasion, no infidel eye may witness the arrival.

The ram, a huge animal of the Angora breed, with snow-white fleece, lay dead as we passed at the foot of the steps by which the Sultan reaches his own aparments. On arriving at our gallery we found that we were so high above the floor, and the hall of audience so vast, that we could scarcely distinguish the features of those below us.

But for a few attendants hurrying about, the hall was empty, except that the throne, a large armchair and footstool in cloth of gold, already stood in its place at the upper end of the hall facing the grand entrance doors. Over these doors was a smaller gallery, where the band was placed, which played beautifully till the ceremony began.

Our gallery, though not much more than half the length of the hall, was large enough for a good ball-room. The ladies were in front, looking over the balustrade, the gentlemen stood behind, and at the back, beneath the lofty windows, was a buffet, with gold plate laden with every delicacy. Gradually the hall began to fill.

The crowd of magnificent uniforms was very great. They stood in ranks, one behind the other, forming three sides of a square, leaving the centre of the hall facing the throne free. The Imperial Household, headed by the Chief Eunuch, stood across the hall behind the throne in order of precedence, all in magnificent uniforms, and most of them with orders.

It would be difficult to imagine a more gorgeous scene. Every variety of uniform, sheiks from the desert in burnous and turban, priests, ulemahs, ministers all alike blazing with orders. I asked Sadik Bey why there was so long a delay, as it was nearly eight o'clock in the morning. He told me that the Sultan, tired with the early prayers, had gone to sleep.

At length the band ceased, and the small, stately man appeared through a door near the throne, followed by Osman Ghazi only. The Sultan wore a plan military frock-coat, a fez, like all the rest of the brilliant throng, with a curved gold-hilted sword—no decoration of any sort.

As he entered every one in the hall bowed to the very ground, and remained so till he had taken his seat. Osman Ghazi stood at the right of the Sultan's throne, with a gold-embroidered scarf over his right arm, which was kissed by the less august members of the assembly, who had no right to touch the Sultan.

As soon as the Sultan was seated the court ulemah stepped up on his left and uttered a low prayer, the whole assembly standing in the prayer attitude, with the hands raised and the palms turned toward the face, as if forming a book.

Directly the priest stepped back, the reception began at once in perfect silence; the Pashas passing upon the Sultan's right, prostrating themselves and kissing the scarf, and then backing away on his left in a crouching attitude; and saluting as they backed by touching the ground, their heart, and their forehead with the right hand.

Those who were well accustomed to court life executed this movement with perfect grace, but most of the provincial Pashas were exquisitely awkward, and, instead of pausing between each salutation, continued the movement incessantly, and long after they were hidden from the Sultan by those following them.

The Pashas who were personal friends of the Sultan were not allowed to fall at his feet; a very slight movement of the Imperial hand showed that they were only to bow low. At length all had passed by, and taken their places again in ranks round the hall.

And now the silence was broken for the first time, the Grand Master of Ceremonies, stepping into the centre of the hall and announcing in a loud voice, "The Sheik-ul-Islam." Immediately a tall, dignified old man, in a long white robe and turban, approached up the open space in the centre, and as he neared the throne the Sultan rose and bowed his head, while the Sheik-ul-Islam raised his hands in blessing and uttered a prayer, all the Pashas reassuming the attitude of prayer.

He then stood aside and the Sultan resumed his place, and all the other ulemahs present came forward up the centre and made their obeisance. Their dresses were most brilliant—black, green, purple, and blue satin robes mixed with white—and many of them wore orders.

As soon as the last ulemah had passed, the Sultan rose, without any sort of salutation to any one, and while all present bowed again to the very ground, passed out of the hall, with only Osman Ghazi in attendance.

THE EAR.—As without the ear the voice would be useless, so upon the way in which the ear is used many of the results of speech depend. Some persons really seem hardly able to listen at all. They probably deem it so easy a task that it is not worth their while to attempt it. Fond of talking, they dislike to be interrupted, and only under the compulsion of politeness do they force themselves to be patient. But such patience is not listening; they scarcely hear, much, less consider, what is said, and eagerly embrace the first moment of silence to renew their own utterance.

Grains of Gold.

Vanity is the only intellectual enjoyment of many people.

Pride is the first weed to grow in the human heart, and the last to be eradicated.

He who gets into war, the chase, or in love will not get out of it just when he pleases.

It was not the magnitude of the Grecian army, nor the martial skill of Achilles their leader, that conquered the city of Troy, but ten years' perseverance.

Mankind may be divided into three classes: those who do what is right from principle; those who act from appearances; and those who act from impulse.

The brave man is not he who feels no fear, for that were stupid and irrational; but he, whose noble soul its fear subdues, and bravely dares the danger Nature shrinks from.

The man who thinks his wife, his baby, his house, his horse, his dog, and himself, severally unequalled, is almost sure to be a good-humored person, though liable to be tedious at times.

Femininities.

Where pride begins love ceases.

In the husband wisdom in the wife gentleness.

To learn a girl's character, mark how she takes a favor.

Lay figures of wealthy customers are kept by some of the leading dressmakers.

Expensive jewelry is polished only with rouge, and finished off with a plain chamois leather.

A tiny scent satchel, with a little clip to fasten inside the bodice, is one of the society woman's latest fancies.

Hostess: "I suppose there is no use of asking you to stay to dinner."

Caller: "Well, no, not in that way."

The Indians give each other very significant names. There was a woman at Fort Simpson, whose name was "Thirty-Six Tongues."

At Plougastel, a small town in France, all the weddings of the year are celebrated on one day. In February last thirty-four couples were married simultaneously.

The rich are miserable because they have discovered that money cannot buy happiness, and the poor are wretched because they have not money enough to make the experiment.

It Has a Foreign Sound.—Mrs. White—Does your daughter speak French fluently now?

Mrs. Brown: Well, she speaks sometimes fluently, and it doesn't sound at all like English, so perhaps it may be French.

The Marquis of Ripon, the Earls of Chichester, Morley, Clarendon and Cowper, and Lords Austhill and Walsingham are said to have, through female lines, the blood of Cromwell in their veins.

"I wonder," said the Sweet Young Thing, "why a man is always so frightened when he proposes?"

"That," said the Chronic Bachelor, "is his guardian angel trying to hold him back."

While many specialists advocate gentle brushing only, numbers of ladies have their eyebrows clipped and singed. A quite harmless eyebrow darkener that is extensively used is simply Chinese ink evenly mixed with rose water.

Mrs. Dunleigh: "It is very singular that your mother always happens to call on me when I am out."

Little Flossie Dimpleton: "Oh, we can see from our front window whenever you go away."

Teller: "Grimshaw is the only man of my acquaintance who invariably wins in an argument with a woman."

Askins: "How, in the name of wonder, does he do it?"

Teller: "Oh! he states his side of the case and walks off."

Masculinities.

If you want to be popular, don't think out loud.

The difficulty with the ready tongue is that it is seldom ready to stop.

The man who nurses his wrongs carefully finds that they grow rapidly.

We start in life with a great stock of wisdom, but it grows less the further we go.

You can make lots of headway sometimes by admitting that you are wrong when you are not.

Your personal affairs are of very little concern to the world, unless you have been doing something that you ought'n to.

Love is an hallucination which makes otherwise sane men believe that they can set up housekeeping on a gas-stove and a canary bird.

She: "Are you sure you will like married life as well as you do your club?" He: "Oh Yes!" She: "And are you so awfully fond of your club?" He: "Not very."

Perkins: Has Slopay ever paid you that $10 he borrowed last year? Dobson: No, I guess he has forgotten all about it; he is just as social and friendly as he ever was.

When Rogers the poet, who was notorious for his ugliness, informed Sydney Smith that he wished to be painted in a devotional attitude the humorist promptly suggest that he bury his face in his hat.

Despite his worries, Sultan Abdul Hamid's hair never grows white. To prevent that it is dyed, and the dyeing is repeated as often as is needful, for, according to Turkish Court etiquette, the Sultan's hair must always be black.

The Archdeacon of Westmoreland in England boasts that in his boyhood he was taught to work with his hands, and for many a year he knitted stockings for all the family. He also learned to sew, and mastered the intricacies of hemming, seaming, backstitching, gussets, and so on.

The shortest epistle ever written consisted of one letter, and that a very small one. A French poet wrote Piron, the comic dramatist, two words, "Eo rus," meaning, "I am going into the country." Piron, not to be outdone in brevity, answered by the single letter "I," which means in Latin, "Go." It seems impossible to carry brevity any further than this.

Melancthon studied the gravest points of theology while he held his book in his hand, and in the other the edge of a cradle, which he incessantly rocked. "M. Esprit," a celebrated author and scholar, "has been caught by me," says M. Marville, "reading Plato with great attention, considering the interruptions which he met from the necessity of frequently blowing his little boy's whistle."

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Latest Fashion Phases.

In Paris all the new winter tissues, though thick and heavy, are extremely soft, and wonderfully adapted to the loose skirts, which fall so naturally and gracefully around the figure without being stiffened by under-bands of steel or horsehair, or even by unbending underflounces.

The cut of fashionable skirts is, in fact, but little modified, the widths are sloped so as to form wide undulations at the foot, while the material is stretched plain over the hips, or at least gathered so slightly as not to form any thickness about the waist.

As is always the case when skirts are made to fall loose, and not stiffened out, they are made long enough to rest on the ground a little at the back, and with dressy toilets they are even trained a little. When lined it is with soft silk or satinette, so as to avoid stiffness; but in case of not very thick materials, it is preferable to have the skirt put on upon the same waistband with an under skirt of the lining.

As a rule, woollen dresses are made with plain skirts, without any trimming. A dress of cornflower-blue double cashmere, the skirt of which was in this plain loose style, had by way of bodice a blouse jacket of the same material, with revers of white and orange checked velvet.

A belt of white leather fastened the jacket at the back and sides, was slipped through the pleats, which fit the fronts, leaving them loose and open over a chemisette of orange-colored glace silk, covered with white lawn, inlaid with strips of Valenciennes lace insertion, forming a diamond pattern. The collar was of white satin, frilled with Valenciennes lace.

Another dress is of still greater simplicity. It is of the new thick and soft cloth, called the national cloth, of a medium shade of beige. The blouse bodice is trimmed with bias-bands, of the same material, in white, forming three tabs on each side, fastened at either end with a small pearl button.

A similar tab simulates a fastening on the left side of the skirt. The belt and the collar, the latter edged with a dainty frilling of white lawn, were of sea green moire silk.

A very neat and elegant dress was of soft silver-gray velouting, suitable for a young lady. The upper part of both skirt and bodice are arranged in fine stitched-down pleats. The bodice is confined round the waist by a deep Russian belt of gray leather, studded with rubies, and mounted with silver.

The collar is of ruby silk, frilled with lace. The tight-sleeves have epaulettes formed of a double drapery of the material, and are finished at the wrists with ruby satin and lace. The striped pleats, coming about one third down the skirt, expand into soft folds.

Hats rival dresses in simplicity. A great many ladies wear the plain felt, in shape like a gentleman's round hat, with no trimming but a strip of braid or ribbon round the brim. Some, however, add to it an eagle or a heron's wing, or an aigrette.

The fashionable lady's shoe outfit for the season includes at least two or three pairs of boots, one of dull calf or colt, and one or two of dull kid faced with patent leather, two pairs of laced shoes, one of kid, and one of patent leather, and three or four pairs of low patent leather shoes for the afternoon and evening would be sufficient.

Those fond of dainty chaussures add two pairs of morocco slippers, lined with flannel, and half a dozen pairs of evening satin shoes, either black, or matched in color to the dress. As to white satin shoes for ball-dress, it is best to buy them quite fresh each time required.

As a rule, all shoes and boots are made with slightly rounded toes. Everyday walking boots have the low heel, but for more elegant chaussures the semi high heel is perferred. Boots are faced all round all in one piece, and are of medium height.

The glazed kid boot stitched with white is now quite out of fashion, for not only are white stitchings quite out of date, but glazed kid itself is now rarely employed except for girls' and children's boots. Dull kid boots faced with patent leather, or the high patent leather shoes, are the most fashionable for afternoon and visiting dress.

Black still reigns supreme in fashionable hose. The daintiest of stockings are of black silk or Irish thread, with embroidered clocks. For the evening the most elegant are of open-work silk. For ball toilets white silk hose is generally preferred, but in some instances the silk stocking is matched in color to the ball-dress, or to the accessories of the toilet.

In evening toilets recently seen the materials were silk crepon, etamine, and plain or fancy gauzes. Pale rose color, sulphur and pinkish mauve seem to be the favorite tints, but black and white is still much approved of combination.

There is a new tissue called zephyrine, which shows a black lace pattern over white silk gauze, and is extremely effective. It will make up beautifully in the loose tunic style, which is likely to be in great vogue this winter.

When entirely white, the dress is often trimmed with black lace. Thus one lately shown was a very stylish dress of white silk gauze over white glace silk. Floral patterns of Chantilly lace are worked in applique over the skirt, and a Chantilly lace scarf is draped round the waist. Bows of lemon colored ribbon form spaulettes, and loop up the skirt on the left side.

Also a pretty evening dress for a young lady is of rose colored silk etamine over silk to match. A round yoke of white tulle is trimmed with crossings of narrow black velvet, and edged round with a border of white lace. Draped belt and collar of rose colored satin.

Every year sees a vast improvement in velveteens; the depth of pile, finish of surface, delicacy and mellowness of coloring, all show a great advance this season on the production of previous years.

There are at least a dozen different shades of green amongst the patterns seen; lovely fawns and browns, grays and crimsons, and the most delicate shades of blue and pink; the shades of colors are so numerous that they match any tint anyone can possibly desire to combine with them.

Nothing is handsomer for dinner and reception-dresses than velveteen; it is also most useful for walking-dresses, and the softness of its texture renders it particularly suitable for the Russian blouses and pouched bodices so fashionable this season.

For children's evening-dresses it is invaluable, as they are accustomed to wear warm dresses during the winter, and many a fatal cold is caught from wearing a thin frock at a winter evening party. A very light shade of velveteen trimmed with lace makes as charming an evening dress as can be desired, whilst for little boys nothing is so smart as velveteen in black or dark brown and fawn.

One of the new fur bodices is of mink, fastened down the front under a scalloped frill of brown velveteen; the sleeves are of velveteen, which to make them warm for winter outdoor wear should be interlined with domette. Toque of brown velveteen, trimmed with two shaded tips, and a gold and enamel buckle.

A charming dinner-dress is in pale grayish-blue velveteen. The skirt is bordered with a vandyke trimming of silk and iridescent bead embroidery; the tight fitting bodice is embroidered all over from under the arms to the waist; the upper part is composed of puffings of white chiffon over a silk lining; the drapery on the bodice is of the velveteen arranged in soft folds; the collar is of the velveteen embroidered; transparent puckered sleeves of white chiffon with drapery of velveteen at the top.

An afternoon-dress is of almond color; the skirt, which falls in graceful folds at the back, is trimmed on the hips with bands of silk, edged with gold and brown braid; the full bodice is gathered between the waist and the bust, the velveteen being set out in puffs separated by a band of silk edged with gold and brown braid; the waistband and border to the square opening of the bodice is of the same, the opening is filled in with a chemisette of pale green silk, arranged in puffs which are divided by bands of narrow tinsel trimming; the tight-fitting sleeves have puffs at the top, and the elbow edged with silk bands, like those on the bodice, but of narrower width.

Odds and Ends.

USEFUL HINTS ON A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS.

Suggestions on Home Nursing.—In giving medicines 1 A marked measure glass should be used when possible. 2 The medicine must be given regularly. 3. Measure carefully and correctly. 4 Pour out on the side furthest from the label. 5 Wash the glass or spoon after each dose. 6 Keep applications for external use only in blue fluted bottles, and in a different place from those medicines to be taken internally, for fear of mistakes. 7. Always read the label before pouring out.

Cod liver oil is best given early in the day and after food; it may cause diarrhœa, especially in hot weather; if so, a different preparation may be tired.

Iron should be taken after meals, and it often gives rise to constipation, so watch should be kept and an aperient given when necessary. Should indigestion be set up by iron, a different preparation may be tried.

To Give Castor Oil.—This may either be given in strong coffee or warm milk; the latter method is the better way for young children. Another way is to give it in boiling water, which breaks up the fat globules and renders it less greasy; or the castor oil may be given in soda water.

Soothing powders should not be given to babies unless ordered by a doctor, they often contain opiates, and may do grave harm.

Effervescing medicines should be brought to the patient in separate glasses and mixed when the patient is ready to drink.

Powders may be mixed with jam, sugar, or glycerine, or put to the back of the tongue, and a drink of water given to carry it down.

In scarlet fever, the most infectious time is when the person is convalescent, and the skin is peeling; it is a good plan to rub the patient with some disinfectant ointment or oil to prevent the particles of skin from flying about. Flannel ought to be worn next the skin, especially over the region of the kidneys, so as to avoid any chance of a chill, which is a serious matter, after even a slight case of scarlet fever.

Barley Water.—Two ounces of pearl barley, cover with one pint of water and boil quickly to wash the barley; then throw away the first water, add fresh water, boil and throw away, then add a pint and a half of fresh cold water and let it boil gently for half an hour, i.e., till the barley is quite soft. Then strain off and flavor with lemon, vanilla, or orange juice.

Restorative Soup.—Another nice food for invalids is one pound of veal, one pound of gray beef, one pound of mutton, half a large fowl, and one quart of water; allow it to simmer slowly for six hours, then strain and serve. Give one teaspoonful of the jelly thus made every half hour, or so often as necessary.

Raw Meat Juice.—Scrape one ounce of raw meat into a pulp and cover it with cold water (about half an ounce would be sufficient) and leave it to stand for two hours, stirring it about every ten minutes; then squeeze the juice through muslin, and give it to the patient. It is almost tasteless.

To Make Gruel.—To one tablespoonful of oatmeal or prepared groats, allow one pint of water and a small piece of butter. Mix the oatmeal with a little cold water, add the rest of the water with the butter when boiling. Stir well to prevent lumps. The prepared groats require ten minutes' boiling, the oatmeal requires twenty minutes' boiling. If the milk is used instead of water the piece of butter is not required.

Children when ill require special care, as their diseases develop very rapidly and much depends on their being carefully watched. Many diseases in children are due to mistakes in feeding them, especially is this the case in children under two years of age. To understand the principle of artificial feeding of children is therefore of great importance.

Human milk is the natural and best food; it contains everything that is necessary for the formation and nourishment of a child during the first few months of life; it ought therefore to be made the type food of all artificial feeding of infants. First as to quantity, one pint of milk in the twenty four hours during the first few weeks of life, increasing in quantity as the child grows older.

Regularity in feeding as to time and quantity is essential. Cow's milk diluted with water one to three and three grains of soda bicarb, added is a good substitute; or the cow's milk diluted with lime or barley water in the same proportions, and artificial human milk are useful to try where the child has to be brought up by hand.

To make Artificial Human Milk.—Heat half a pint of skimmed milk to about ninety seven degrees, i.e., just warm, and well stir into the warmed milk, three grains of extract of rennet. When it is set, break the curd quite small, and let it stand ten or fifteen minutes, when the curd will sink; then place the whey in a saucepan, and boil quickly.

In the whey dissolve a heaped up teaspoonful of sugar in milk. When quite cold add sufficient new milk to make one pint, and two teaspoonfuls of cream, well stirring the whole together. If the milk is too rich use rather a larger proportion of whey.

Peptonized milk is an excellent preparation of partly digested food, only it must not be continued too long, as the digestive powers of the infant may become weakened from want of use. Mix three quarters of a pint of fresh milk with a quarter of a pint of water, warm to about forty degrees, add two level teaspoonfuls of some liquor pancreaticus and half a level teaspoonful of soda bicarb., stir in quickly and allow it to stand for twenty minutes, it is then ready for use; but if the peptonized process is to be stopped, the milk must be boiled.

Egg Jelly.—Half an ounce of gelatine soaked in half a pint of cold water, add rind and juice of two lemons, then some sugar to sweeten, and half a pint of boiling water. When cold strain on to three eggs well beaten, then strain into a mould.

No starchy food should form the chief element of diet during the first year of life as it tends to make the child rickety. Care must be taken that the feeding-bottle is kept absolutely clean. The boat-shaped bottle is the best.

Do not allow children to get into the habit of having so called "comforters" to suck. Wash out the mouth of infants with warm water after feeding, it keeps the gums healthy and renders teething easier for the baby; and a soft tooth-brush should be used for children as early as possible. Four teaspoonfuls of glycerine to one ounce of honey with one teaspoonful of borax is often of use as a mouth wash where the gums are sore and bleed easily.

For children inclined to rickets raw meat pulp scraped from a juicy piece of beef and spread on bread with a little sugar, or made into balls with sugar like little raspberries will often be taken by children, and is very good for them. Oranges, limes, and cream are also good to be taken when possible, and the food should contain as much of the fatty element as possible.

Chicken Jelly for Invalids.—Cut a chicken (a hen is better) as for a fricassee. Put it into a double boiler with an even teaspoonful of celery-seed; cover closely, and let it cook for five hours. Strain it through an ordinary strainer, and leave it to stiffen. Remove all the fat, melt the jelly, and salt to taste, and strain it through two thickness of cheese-cloth. The quantity will be about half a pint. An excellent broth is made by adding three tablespoonfuls of boiling water to one of the jelly.

Pressed Beef.—The thin end of the flank is best for pressing beef. Take out the bone and remove any skin there may be. Then for four pounds of beef take one pound of salt, an ounce and a half of bay-salt, the same of saltpetre, three quarters of a pound of brown sugar, half a tea spoonful of black pepper, a pinch of powdered cloves, half a teaspoonful of ground mace, half a saltspoonful of ground nutmeg, half a dozen bay-leaves, and some sprigs of fresh thyme.

Rub the meat well with this mixture all round every day for ten days, turning it every day. Before cooking it, rinse it well, and put some fresh vegetables into the water in which you boil it. It should be brought gently to boiling-point, and should then simmer gently for three hours. When done, press it under heavy weights until cold, then trim the edges, and brush over the top and sides with some liquid glass.

To clean Paint.—Smear a piece of flannel in common whiting, mixed to the consistency of common paste in warm water. Rub the surface to be cleaned quite briskly, and wash off with pure cold water. Grease spots will in this way be almost instantly removed, as well as other dirt, and the paint will retain its brilliancy and beauty unimpaired.

Toffy.—One pound of sugar, half a pint of water, half a cup of butter, and one teaspoonful of lemon juice; put on the sugar, water, and lemon, and boil without stirring for ten minutes; then add butter, and boil till it snaps, as before; pour out on a buttered dish, and cut in small squares when half cold.

LOOKING BACK.

BY L. J.

I'm looking back with eyes tear-wet, my darling,
Across the years to Childhood's sunny morn,
Hearing the joyous mirth, the happy voices
Around the sweet old home that's now forlorn;
And, looking back, I only see the roses
That ne'er to childish eyes concealed a thorn!

I'm looking back with throbbing heart, my darling,
On Love's bright fairyland of long ago—
Dreaming the old fond dreams, in sweet assurance
That naught save bliss our future lives would know;
And, looking back, I only see the sunshine
That glorifies our Summer world below!

Ah, sad the time and drear since then, my darling!
The roses died, and gloaming hid the shine;
'Mid changing years our lives for aye are severed,
Yet mem'ry holds that youth of love divine,
And, looking back, I only know I love you
As in those golden days when you were mine!

A Summer Morning.

BY E W

IT was a lovely morning, and looking back upon it, I pronounce it to have been a perfect beginning of a perfect day.

It was the twenty-fourth day of June, the scene a bowery shady garden. My guardian's study faced the gardens, and its window was more than half way down to the ground.

The roses were always thrusting their pretty blossoms into my guardian's sanctum, peeping in and rustling their leaves and buds beyond the folds of the curtains. Into this room I was one morning invited to enter.

"Jennie, my child, when are you coming?"

"Now, Guardie, dear—this very moment!" said I looking up and seeing his kind eyes watching me; and I gathered up the flowers and put them and the scissors hastily into my basket and ran to the window.

"Come here, Jennie, and sit at my feet, as you so often do, and then I fancy I can talk to you better. I think that the chair was a mistake, after all."

How fanciful he was that morning! But, nothing loath, I obeyed him, feeling more at home and natural thus. Still he continued watching the wreathes of smoke musingly, still uninspired, still silent.

"I think the stool is a failure, too," I suggested demurely. "Shall I try the table, Guardie dear? Something brilliant might result from that, you know."

"Don't be a goose, but listen to me!"

I quietly intimated that such was my wish.

"Jennie," said he, "I have just made an acquaintance."

"Indeed, Guardie!" was my reply, not feeling greatly interested. "An agreeable one, I hope!"

"No, my child—an intensely disagreeable one—an old lady always suggesting unpleasant things and never admitting pleasant ones—Mrs. Grundy by name."

"Oh, the awful old woman, Guardie! I have heard of her. Wash your hands of her, and decline even a bowing acquaintance!"

"I fear that in this case that is unfortunately impossible. She is, as you say, an awful old woman; but she is a social necessity, and the very fear she inspires works its own good, I think. Yes—people that are afraid of nothing else are afraid of Mrs. Grundy. I am!"

"Then, Guardie, you are a coward—far more so than I am when I run away from a cow!"

"Ah," he replied, "but Mrs. Grundy is much more formidable!"

"Nasty old thing!"

"Yes—a nasty old thing, as you say; but still she must be studied. She has just given me some advice which I intend taking." A pause here, devoted to the cigar, which he had somewhat neglected during his remarks about Mrs. Grundy. Then he resumed—"I don't know how to tell you!"

Suddenly his voice became expressibly tender.

"My little ward; my dear little girl, I seem to feel that I am going to grieve you, but yet I must!" Then I felt the loving hands stroking my hair with almost womanly tenderness. "Jennie, I am going to marry!"

I remember just for one instant raising my eyes to his with the yearning hope of seeing that he was jesting. A glance sufficed, and I lowered my face immediately, fearing that he should read the mute agony that I felt must be depicted there.

I can recall so well arranging my little black apron over my muslin dress, then adjusting a bow with which I was suddenly dissatisfied, but keeping my head bent low, and all the while fighting that woman's battle, so often fought and won, of concealing the sudden grief that had come upon an untried heart.

"Jennie, speak—say something to me."

My guardian's voice completed the victory, and in tones which to my own ears seemed unlike my own, I managed to say:

"I hope that you will be very happy, dear Guardie."

"Thank you, little one. But I do not feel inclined just now to talk of all the happiness it may bring about; I want to know what you think of it."

I had had two minutes to conquer my emotion; and what may not a woman achieve in a hundred-and twenty seconds? More than many a warrior in as many hours, I think. So I managed, with tolerable composure, to answer:

"I think you are right. A bachelor life must to some extent be a lonely one; and you are not fitted for a lonely life. Your nature requires some one to love; and—and hope that you will be happy." I began to feel that I had attempted too much.

"Thank you, my child!" was my guardian's only answer, rather sadly spoken.

Another pause—the only sound the whispering of the rose leaves to the soft summer breeze that was wooing them. The silence was more difficult to bear than words, so I made another mighty effort.

"Who is the lady?"

My guardian started, as if a fresh idea had only just been presented to him.

"Why, Jennie, I never thought about that! The lady? Yes, of course, a lady is a necessity. I wonder who would have me?"

"Oh, anybody would, Guardie!" was my unsophisticated reply.

"You little flatterer! But I really cannot answer your question. Is there any one you would prefer, dear?"

I gazed at him with incredulity; but he spoke with such evident simplicity that I could not doubt him. I answered rather gravely:

"My preference is not of great importance; but, as you do not—I mean, as you are not—" how difficult it was to say!—"as you do not seem to be in love, why do you wish to marry?"

My guardian removed his cigar and, biting his moustache, nervously, looked puzzled.

"Your question," he replied, "could be a natural one if I had not already mentioned a certain Mrs. Grundy to you."

My indignation was aroused at this.

"Surely, Guardie, you will not marry just because some people wish you to do so!"

"Don't look furious, Jennie, and I will try to explain. Well, this is how it stands. Mrs. Grundy has intimated to me that this would be a more suitable home for you if it had a mistress."

Still at sea, I asked with some pique if I fulfilled the duties of a mistress so badly; and even while speaking, the remembrance of many little household irregularities came reproachfully to me. I saw it all now. I did not scold the servants enough; I allowed myself—consequently him—to be imposed upon; and as these ideas thronged into my mind, I took his hand penitently, and added, before he could answer:

"Yes, yes—you need not tell me. I have been a bad mistress in your house; but try me a little longer. I will improve; I will read books of household management. I will look well to the ways of my household instead of picking flowers, I will——"

"Hush, my Jennie!" And, looking up, I saw a pained troubled expression upon the face bending down over me. "You are mistaken. My dainty little maiden makes a perfect mistress in our home; but—but—oh, in what way shall I say it?—they say, dear, that, although I am so old and you are so young, this is not a fitting home for you, unless I bring a wife to it."

A rush of scarlet to my face told him that I at last understood him. This was the crowning point. I could not bear the interview any longer; I rose from the low stool at his feet and tried to speak quietly.

"My dear kind guardian, do not change your life on my account! The very step that you would take for my sake—as I think it would be—would be the cause of my leaving your home."

Then my calmness rather forsook me as I added, "I should not wish to live with your wife—I should ask your consent to go—I feel that I should not like her!"

I noticed a comical expression cross my guardian's face when I stated my intention to dislike the unknown lady and he replied:

"On that point we might perhaps agree, but where would you go then? Unless—what a fool I was not to think of it before!—unless you yourself marry; for I suppose Charlie Thorne is merely waiting a favorable——"

This was too much. With my voice quivering with indignation, I tried to answer him.

"You know you do not believe what you say. You may take refuge in matrimony from your difficulties; it is not so with me. How dare you ever allude to a boy, a child"—the child, by the-bye, was twenty-two—four years my senior—"like that? I could bear you to say anything else, even—even——"

Here I paused, choked by short, choking, tearless sobs. How well I remember it all!—his looking up at my excited face, at my dry, sorrowful eyes, and the sudden change that came over him as he observed them. It is all so vivid—how he rose hastily and flung his cigar out of the window, then strode up to me and imprisoned the hands that vainly strove to hide my crimson face!

It seemed to me an age while he stood looking down upon me, and I felt suddenly that I could not return his gaze. At length he spoke, and the words came to me tenderly and soothingly, and ended forever my short-lived woe.

"Jennie, Jennie, my bonnie winsome little blossom, do not ridicule me if the idea seems too absurd to your bright young fancy; but"—how his voice faltered now—"but, although I am such a weather-beaten old fellow, can you accept me, darling, not only for the guardian of your youth, but as the guardian of your life?" He paused. "My child, speak—pray speak—and if I have made the mistake of a dotard, tell me so quickly."

Here, for the first time, tears came; but they were tears of pure joy, of deep thankfulness.

"Speak, Jennie!"

"Oh, my guardian, let me stay with you!"

It was all I could utter, and yet some thing in the tone must have betrayed the woman's secret that the girl's timidity refused to reveal, for he understood me. He understood—what hitherto had not, I think, been quite divined by either of us—that, as I was the apple of his eye, he was the sunshine of my life; so he merely held out his arms and gathered me to the dear heart which has been my warm shelter ever since.

"Ah, Guardie," said I, after half an hour's sweet whispering, though there were only the roses by to listen—"I reverse my verdict about Mrs Grundy! I think that, instead of being a nasty old woman, she is a most charming old lady, for, if it had not been for her——"

"Well?" asked the guardian, laughing as I paused.

"Well, things would have been very different!"

And so ends the record of that lovely summer morning. The little roses are peeping over these pages to see what happened in the time of their ancestors, and to them I boldly declare that I am now twenty-eight and my husband on the very decidedly shady side of forty, and that I am proud—yes, I say it advisedly—very proud of his superiority of years! The summer morning was but the beginning of a summer day that has lasted ever since.

THE COLDEST SPOT.—The coldest region of the globe, that of Werkojansk, in Siberia, where the lowest temperature of 0 99 deg Fahrenheit has been observed, and the mean of January is 0 48 deg., is inhabited by about ten thousand five hundred people of the native races. In a large part of this region the air is so dry and winds are so rare, that the intensity of the cold is not realised.

Further east there are sometimes terrible storms. In the summer time the temperature sometimes rises to 86 deg. in the shade, while it freezes at night. The latter part of this season is often marked by copious rains and extensive inundations. Vegetation is scanty. There are no trees. The people hunt fur-bearing animals, fish, and raise cattle and reindeer. It requires about eight cows to support a family, four being milked in the summer and two in the winter.

The cattle are fed on hay in the winter, and are allowed to go out occasionally when it is not too cold, their teats being carefully covered with felt.

Milk is the principal food, occasionally supplemented with hares, which are quite abundant. The houses are of wood, covered with clay, and consist of one room, in which the people and their animals live together.

The wealthier classes are better provided with lodging and food. The people are very hospitable, but excessively punctilious concerning points of honor, such as the place at table.

HINTS TO MOTHERS.—If you wish to cultivate a gossiping, meddling, censorious spirit in your children, be sure when they come home from church, a visit, or other place where you do not accompany them, to ply them with questions concerning what everybody wore, how everybody looked, and what everybody said and did; and if you find anything in all this to censure, always do it in their hearing.

You may rest assured, if you pursue a course of this kind, they will not return to you unladen with intelligence; and rather than it should be uninteresting, they will by degrees learn to embellish it in such manner as shall not fail to call forth remarks and expressions of wonder from you.

You will, by this course, render the spirit of curiosity—which is so early visible in children, and which, if rightly directed, may be made the instrument of enriching and enlarging their minds—a vehicle of mischief, which shall serve only to narrow them.

WONDERFUL MARKSMANSHIP.—A Texas military company went out on the range recently practising at rifle shooting. The lieutenant in command suddenly became exasperated at the poor shooting, and, seizing a gun from one of the privates, angrily exclaimed, "I'll show you fellows how to shoot!" Taking a long aim and a strong sight, he fired and missed. Coolly turning to the private who owned the gun, he said, "That's the way you shoot." He again loaded the weapon, and missed. Turning to the second man in the ranks, he remarked, "That's the way you shoot." In this way he contrived to miss about fifty or sixty times, illustrating to each soldier his personal incapacity; and finally he accidentally hit the target. "And that," he ejaculated, handing the gun back to the private, "is the way I shoot."

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by local applications, as they cannot reach the diseased portion of the ear. There is only one way to cure Deafness, and that is by constitutional remedies. Deafness is caused by an inflamed condition of the mucous lining of the Eustachian Tube. When this tube gets inflamed you have a rumbling sound or imperfect hearing, and when it is entirely closed Deafness is the result, and unless the inflammation can be taken out and this tube restored to its normal condition, hearing will be destroyed forever; nine cases out of ten are caused by catarrh, which is nothing but an inflamed condition of the mucous surfaces.

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Philadelphia

Humorous.

A MISSPELLED TALE.

A little buoy said, "Mother deer,
May Eye go out to play?
The son is bright, the heir is clear;
Owe, mother, don't say neigh!"

"Go fourth, my sun," the mother said.
The ant said, "Take your slay—
Your gneiss knew sled, awl painted read;
But dew knot lose your weigh."

"Ah, know!" he cried, and sought the street,
With hart sew full of glee.
The wether changed, and snow and sleet
And reign fell steadily.

Threw snowdrifts grate, threw watery pool,
He flue with mite and mane.
Said he, "Though Eye would walk by rule,
Eye am not rite, 'tis plane.

"Eye, week and pail, have mist my rode—"
But hear a carte came passed;
He and his sled were safely toad
Back to his home at last.

A musical burglar—One who breaks into a tune.

Accustomed to eat their food by the peck—Canaries.

What species of love is that which is never reciprocated? A neuraigic affection.

Marriage is described by a French cynic as a tiresome book with a very fine preface.

"Mamma," said the little boy who had been sent to dry a towel before the fire, "is it done when it is brown?"

The most bashful girl we ever knew was one who blushed when asked if she had not been courting sleep.

The entire assets of a bankrupt were nine children. The creditors acted magnanimously, and let him keep them.

Wife, bitterly: "You deceived me when you married me!"

Husband: "I did more than that. I deceived myself."

"Dah is some friends," said uncle Eben, "dat is like de rainbow. Dey loyks fine an' bends polite, but dey's gone when de sun ain' shinin'."

Don't believe the bicyclist when he tells you that it is easy to ride a wheel. If you will observe carefully, you will notice that he has to have two wheels, in order to ride, himself.

"No, I can't give you a job. I've as many hands now as I can find work for."

"Well, that needn't stand in your way. The little I'd do wouldn't make no difference."

A churchwarden was courteously thanking a chapel-attendant for kindly taking, on emergency, a village service. "A worse preacher would done us, sir," he said, "if we only knew where to find him!"

Willie: "Mamma can people leave parts of themselves in different places?"

"No; don't be ridiculous!"

"Well, Uncle Tom said he was going to South Africa for his lungs."

"Poor Mrs. Jaysmith!" exclaimed Mrs. Gargoyle. "Her husband must treat her shamefully."

"What makes you say that?" asked Mrs. Grummey. "She never complains."

"I know it. That's what makes me suspicious."

"It won't be long," said the man who loves to talk science at the table, "before all our engines and that sort of thing will be run by the heat of the sun."

"But," asked his wife, "if they go to using up the heat of the sun that way, won't it make the weather too cool to grow crops?"

A fly had fallen into the inkstand of a certain author who writes a very bad hand. The writer's little boy rescued the unhappy insect and dropped him on to a piece of paper. After watching him intently for a while, he called to his mother:

"Here's a fly, mamma, that writes just like papa!"

Father, showing off his baby boy to bachelor friend: "Well, what do you think of him? Fine boy, isn't he?"

Bachelor Friend: "Yes, very fine boy, but he's bald. But then (glancing at father's bald head) children are not satisfied nowadays unless they can begin where their fathers left off."

Great picture-buyer, to hostess: "What do you think of an artist who painted cobwebs on a ceiling so truthfully that the servant wore herself into an attack of nervous prostration trying to sweep them down?"

Hostess, a woman of experience: "There may have been such an artist, but there never was such a servant."

In the outer office of a scholarly lawyer is a notice which seems to throw discredit on his education. It reads as follows:

"Please don't throw papers on this here desk. Please don't bother me. Please keep your feat off this desk. Please get out quicker than you come in." The desk is used by the office-boy.

The awe with which the small boy looks upon a retired mariner is probably due to the marvelous experience the mariner remembers to have had. An example came up recently in the course of a conversation between a lad of six and an ex-sea-captain.

"Captain Skaggs, did you ever get your leg bit off by a shark?" asked the boy.

"Did I, sonny," he replied; "did I? Well, rather. Dozens of times!"

SOME SPECIAL AVERSION.

There are, perhaps, not many persons who are entirely free from some particular aversion. In all probability every one of us has an inherent and pronounced dislike of something or other, be it individual, action or mere commodity.

A terrible story was not so very long ago unfolded during a criminal trial in Spain. A young student, the day after notice had been posted up of the results of an examination in which he had failed, stabbed to death, in a small wood, a worthy priest who had been his tutor.

The evidence in the case went to show that, from their first meeting years before, the student, then a mere boy, had taken a violent dislike to the priest. His chief delight was to cause annoyance to this unfortunate tutor; and having failed in his examination, the idea came into his mind that the priest had played him false in order to be revenged. When taxed with the crime the culprit merely said: "I always hated him. I am glad he is dead."

Even more tragic still reads the history of a young girl, employed in a laundry, whose strange antipathy to an inoffensive fellow-creature led to her ending her days in penal servitude.

At a banquet given in a certain Continental town, the little daughter of a wealthy merchant was selected for the honor of presenting a bouquet of flowers to the wife of the mayor.

On the platform stood a number of children of humble birth, included in these, and dressed all in their best, being a party of little girls, the children of the washer-women of the town.

In his speech, while thanking the little lady for her present, the mayor alluded to the other children of less exalted parentage. These remarks terribly put out one of the girls.

"Yes," exclaimed she, with a scowl. "She's a lady. We're only washerwomen's brats. I'd like to kill her."

Those near her only laughed at the wicked speech. They remembered the words when, long afterwards, the young lady, on the eve of her marriage, was stabbed to the heart by the very girl who uttered the threat, and who had subsequently gone into service in the house of the victim's father.

Happily for society in general, individuals who—as we may say—cultivate a special dislike, do not all go so far in their attempts to molest the objects of their aversion.

Sometimes the persistent hater finds satisfaction in comparatively petty, but, nevertheless, extremely unwelcome acts of annoyance.

Of this way of thinking was a gentleman who had an intense antipathy to policemen. Somehow or other he came to make up his mind that the men in blue were in reality the enemies of those whom they were supposed to protect. Therefore, he did all he could to cause inconvenience to the force.

Venturing out at night, he blew whistles in secluded places, and then made good his escape, causing officers to execute wild rushes in various directions, presumably to the rescue of colleagues in distress.

In the end his delight in the discomfiture of the police led him into serious trouble, for he was found guilty of encouraging the confederates of a certain wrong-doer to rescue their comrade from custody.

Small waists have ever found many denunciators. Few, however, have carried the crusade so far as to imitate the example of a clergyman who, from the pulpit, openly pointed out offending lady members in his congregation.

Hardly a sermon did he preach but that this—to him—all-engrossing subject was in some way or other dragged in.

He even went to the length of declaring that, had he his own way in the matter, a lady would be posted at his church door to measure the waists of all her sisters desiring admittance, and invested with authority to bar the entry of each one suspected of the heinous practice of "pulling in."

Small feet were similarly the pet aversion of a lady, herself endowed with unusually large pedal extremities. This amiable female, copying the wearer of a particularly neat boot or shoe, would seek an opportunity for treading heavily upon her toes, sometimes volunteering the opinion that the sufferer would "be considered a beauty—in China."

It was upon the large hat worn by ladies at the theatre that another worthy individual vented his spite.

He struck the name of a young lady relative out of his will because he once caught sight of her wearing head-gear of too ample dimensions; and he proceeded to try to coerce ladies who were quite strangers to him by throwing flour or flour and water over the articles of head adornment that he so thoroughly detested.

When, years ago, machinery was first introduced into a certain trade, one workman predicted that in a very short space of time machines would oust nearly all operatives from their employment. By-and-by he was called upon to decide whether he would stop on and work at a machine or go.

He went; and, getting temporary jobs here and there, occupied himself the while in plotting how he could most effectively damage the machinery at each shop he went to.

Cold meat, macintoshes, people who snore, eye-glasses, soldiers, dustmen, ladies with ringlets, men with red hair, all these, and many others, have been included in the inventory of hatreds, the cherishing of which has led to trouble.

Placed in the dock on a charge of assault, a brawny woman glared at a mild-looking young man as he entered the witness box.

"You saw the assault, I think?" said the magistrate.

"Yeth," answered the witness. "I was sthanding sthill near——"

He got no farther, but ducked his head just in time to avoid a book that was flung at him by the prisoner with an angry cry of, "Why, he's another of 'em. He lisps!"

LIFE'S COMPULSION.—Some people complain of the compulsion that life lays upon them; yet perhaps, were it not for this, our losses would be far more serious.

The discipline which obliges us to work, which forces us to make certain sacrifices, which compels a particular line of conduct, may often prove our best friend in saving our various powers from the atrophy which disuse may bring upon them.

Instead of complaining of our losses, then, it would be better to summon energy and courage to prevent them. Especially our mental and spiritual possessions, the most valuable of all, need never be lost if we but cherish and nourish them by constant and vigorous exercise. "The firefly shines when only on the wing. So it is with the mind; when once we rest, we darken."

HOME INFLUENCE.—Home influence comes into a boy's life after, as well as before, leaving home, and, if he has good opportunities at home to learn something of the difficulties that he is to contend with, and how to conquer them, it will be of very considerable advantage to him.

A Spartan training at home is good for him when he comes into contact with the world. But if, on the contrary, he is led to think that, when the harness galls a little, he can run home and get help to have it lifted off, his life will be a harder one; that which was intended for good can result only in evil.

Let him not be particular about a little overwork, a little hardship. Better be the first boy at the office and the last one to leave it than to reverse this rule. It may seem a little hard, but the boy is making a mark; he is making a name for himself by so doing. There is only about one such boy in a thousand, and the demand is perpetually greater than the supply.

MOST persons resent being "managed" as soon as they are conscious of it. They prefer their own way, even if it be not so good. "Hands off!" they invariably exclaim, while outwardly they are seeking to parry the arguments brought to bear upon them. They may be willing to listen to counsel, to consider suggestions, even to receive censure, but the very idea of being "managed" is repulsive to them, and arouses all their self-assertion. Though they often appear self-willed and perverse, they are merely upholding their own individuality.

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